

# Byzantium in the Eleventh Century

## Being in Between

EDITED BY

Marc D. Luxtermann and Mark Whittow



SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF BYZANTINE STUDIES



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The eleventh century in Byzantium is all about being in between, whether this is between Basil II and Alexios Komnenos, between the forces of the Normans, the Pechenegs and the Turks, or between different social groupings, cultural identities and religious persuasions. It is a period of fundamental changes and transformations, both internal and external, but also a period rife with clichés and dominated by the towering presence of Michael Psellos whose usually self-contradictory accounts continue to loom large in the field of Byzantine studies. The essays collected here, which were delivered at the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, explore new avenues of research and offer new perspectives on this transitional period. The book is divided into four thematic clusters: ‘The age of Psellos’ studies this crucial figure and seeks to situate him in his time; ‘Social structures’ is concerned with the ways in which the deep structures of Byzantine society and economy responded to change; ‘State and Church’ offers a set of studies of various political developments in eleventh-century Byzantium; and ‘The age of spirituality’ offers the voices of those for whom Psellos had little time and little use: monks, religious thinkers and pious laymen.

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# Byzantium in the Eleventh Century

## Being in Between

*Papers from the 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College,  
Oxford, 24–6 March 2012*

*Edited by*  
*Marc D. Lauxtermann and Mark Whittow*



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The 45th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies was held in Exeter College, Oxford on 24–6 March 2012, three remarkably warm days for the season, the second of which not only happened to coincide with the liturgical feast of the Annunciation, but also saw a blockade of Exeter College by LGBT activists. Reason enough, one would say, to enjoy the lovely weather and the idyllic surroundings of Oxford. And yet they came in droves, from nearby and further afield, ostensibly to listen to talks on Byzantium in the eleventh century, but also, even though they may not have realized it, to explore in-betweenness (it's a word, look it up). There was a record number of 52 speakers (23 lectures and 29 short communications) and 150 participants, for which we are immensely grateful. All this would not have been possible without the kind and generous support of the A.G. Leventis Foundation, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, the Interfaculty Committee for Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and the History Faculty. We are also most grateful to the staff of Exeter College and our two energetic student assistants, Prerona Prasad and Eleni Karafotia.

# Abbreviations

<i>AASS</i>	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>BF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>BHG</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BMFD</i>	<i>Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents</i>
<i>BollGrott</i>	<i>Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata</i>
<i>BSl</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>Byz</i>	<i>Byzantion</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CAG</i>	<i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca</i>
<i>CFHB</i>	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EEBS</i>	<i>'Επετηρίς Έταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν</i>
<i>EO</i>	<i>Échos d' Orient</i>
<i>FM</i>	<i>Fontes Minores</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>Hell</i>	<i>Ἑλληνικά</i>
<i>JHSt</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>MEG</i>	<i>Medioevo Greco</i>

MM	<i>Miklosich-Müller</i>
NE	<i>Nέος Ἑλληνομνήμων</i>
OC	<i>Orientalia Christiana</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
PBW	<i>Prosopography of the Byzantine World</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
REG	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l' Orient Chrétien</i>
RSBN	<i>Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici</i>
SBN	<i>Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
StT	<i>Studi e Testi</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
TM	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
VV	<i>Vizantijskij Vremennik</i>
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>

# Introduction

*Marc D. Luxtermann*

There are moments in history when time suddenly seems to accelerate and speed on, leaving behind a trail of bewildered and confused spectators: such is the case with the eleventh century in Byzantium. In poem 66, John Mauropous expresses his surprise at seeing how promptly officials are raised through all the ranks of the imperial administration: the traditional *cursus honorum* has become a dizzying experience in his time (probably the reign of Monomachos, but perhaps later), and he writes: ἀπῆλθεν δὲ χθές, δὲ δὲ ἐνεστῶσα τρέχει, / καὶ τὴν παροῦσαν αὔριον χθές τις φράσει, ‘yesterday is gone, and the present is speeding by: as some may say, today will be yesterday tomorrow’. This is the historical sense of in-betweenness, of being caught up by momentous events and then left behind wondering what has just happened. Is the eleventh century a short Hobsbawmian one (say, 1025 to 1071, from grandeur to misery), a long interval between the Macedonian and Comnenian heydays (say, late tenth to early twelfth centuries), or a blitz moment of Psellian bliss (roughly 1042–75)?

In-betweenness is a state of mind. In postcolonial studies it indicates the being in between cultures, the fate of second- or third-generation immigrants in Europe. In postmodern urban development studies it indicates the being in between places, the fate of commuters travelling from A to B: the London Tube, for example, is a ‘heterotopy’ (to use the term of Foucault), a place of difference and abandonment, a unique non-place in between conflicting identities (say, loyal employee and loving husband). In our field of studies the concept of in-betweenness seems an apt description of the

eleventh century as a transitional period, an in-between area, a state of ambivalence that avoids easy categorization and challenges us to rethink our ideas of Byzantium. In poem 46, Christopher Mitylenaios tells us that the beginning and the end of the book of Job are a story of bliss; it is the middle part, the in-between, that is agonizingly painful: τὰ δ' αὖ μέσα φεῦ ὀδυνηρά, ‘but it's the things in the middle that sadly hurt’. The eleventh century is all about being in between, whether this is between the anvil and the hammer, between Basil II and Alexios Komnenos, between the forces of the Normans, the Pechenegs and the Turks, or between different social groupings, cultural identities and religious persuasions. And there is no reason to doubt that this in-betweenness must have been a distinctly unpleasant experience for many Byzantines. It is because of Psellos’ rhetorical forcefulness that we tend to see the eleventh century as a triumph of ‘humanism’ and enlightened ‘Hellenism’, but it is also, and perhaps primarily, a period of religious uncertainty, spiritual anguish and pious regrets. To quote the always quotable Lemire, ‘La caractéristique du temps, c'est plutôt qu'on parle beaucoup du savoir et de la culture’: it is indeed much cry and little wool. The eleventh century significantly begins with the mystical effusions of Symeon the New Theologian and ends with the *Dioptra* of Philip Monotropos, a huge compendium of religious and ethical teachings. There is little ‘Hellenism’ there and much spiritual anxiety.

In general, the problem with the eleventh century is that there is too much Psellos and a lack of everything else. Few would doubt that it is a period of fundamental changes and transformations, both internal and external (just compare the later part of Basil II’s reign with the early years of Alexios Komnenos, and it is not difficult to spot the differences). But it is also a period rife with clichés and dominated by the towering presence of Michael Psellos whose usually self-contradictory accounts continue to loom large in the field of Byzantine studies. How do we move forward from there? And to what extent do other old explanatory models (all of them owing some sort of debt to Psellos) have any relevance now?

The last sustained effort to look at the eleventh century from multiple perspectives came in the 1970s, shaped strongly by work on a series of key

texts, such as the lists of precedence, the will of Boilas, the diataxis of Attaleiates, the *typikon* of Pakourianos, the archival materials of Athos, the letters of Psellos, and so on. This led to a number of extremely important publications by Lemerle, Lefort, Gautier and others; the special issue of *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976) is significant in this respect. Since that time there has been a great deal of work in a variety of disciplines and on a variety of materials which were not privileged in the 1970s, especially sigillography, numismatics, epigraphy, historiography, poetry, epistolography, religious polemic, monastic life and popular religious culture; there has also been a greater appreciation of the need to look at material culture across middle Byzantine history, even if that archaeological material is still relatively unexplored. See, for example, the various papers in V. Vlyssidou (ed.), *The Empire in Crisis (?): Byzantium in the Eleventh Century*, or the numerous highly important articles by Jean-Claude Cheynet and his colleagues in Paris.

Much remains to be done. The most pressing issue at hand is the need to have reliable editions and translations of key texts. Stratis Papaioannou is preparing an edition of Psellos' letters and Michael Jeffreys will publish English summaries of these letters in a volume he and I are co-editing. James Howard-Johnston is preparing a translation of the *Peira* with commentary. Eirini Afendoulidou is about to publish the first scholarly edition of Philip Monotropos' *Dioptra*. Christian Hannick has recently published the *Taktikon* of Nikon of the Black Mountain, including his extremely important correspondence – in this time of growing Greeklessness, Nikon's writings urgently need to be translated. Then there are texts that have been published, but are strangely overlooked by all and sundry: for example, the homilies John Mauropous wrote when he was metropolitan of Euchaita – a rich source of information on the eastern provinces shortly before Manzikert, but foolishly ignored. There is the mass of archaeological data, scattered around in various publications: these need to be assembled and put into perspective; the same goes for numismatic, epigraphic and sigillographic evidence – there is a lot of it, but we need an overview of, and some kind of perspective on, the available material.

As noted above, the second task – after making the primary sources available to the scholarly world – is to rethink the eleventh century. Some years ago fellow Oxonians and I initiated a research project on legal, intellectual and social change in eleventh-century Byzantium, called ‘Transformation of Byzantium’, leading to three workshops, dedicated to the *Peira* of Eustathios Romaios and legal culture in the eleventh century, the letters of Michael Psellos and his social networks, and social change in town and country and the feudal revolution. The present volume is the natural outcome of this research interest in the eleventh century, and I hope it may further our understanding of this fascinating period, though I must admit it is a bit of a *prothysteron* to do the rethinking before the sources are all available. In a sense, the study of the eleventh century is as in-between as the period itself: the old certainties are gone, but no new ones have taken their place. And *prothysteron* sums this up admirably – we are advancing in reverse.

The volume is divided into four themes. As noted above, Psellos remains the key figure in our understanding of the eleventh century, and the only way to out-Psellos the Psellian paradigm, is to face him head-on – and this is done in the first thematic cluster, ‘The age of Psellos’. Magdalino discusses the transition from Constantine VII’s ‘encyclopaedism’ to the age of Psellos; Jeffreys offers an overview of Psellian studies now; Bernard analyses the social network of Psellos and his fellow λόγιοι, with reference to schools and literary production; and Cheynet studies Psellos as a civil servant writing to other civil servants, with particular interest in the workings of the imperial administration.

The second thematic cluster, ‘Social structures’, looks at the gradual, almost imperceptible changes in Byzantine society: the ways in which the deep structures of society and economy respond to change. Howard-Johnston examines the *Peira* and the workings of the judicial system in the eleventh century; Sarris views the rural landscape in eleventh-century Byzantium as both stable in terms of traditional agriculture and unstable in terms of temporary ownership; and Greenwood discusses urban patterns in Armenia and the eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire.

The third theme is that of ‘State and Church’. In contrast to the slow societal developments discussed in the previous thematic cluster, here the emphasis is on political change – and it is not the deep structures but the rippling, rapidly changing surface patterns that attract our attention. Whittow argues that the crises of the late eleventh and the late fourth and fifth centuries present two comparable falls of Rome; Shepard offers a detailed analysis of the growing tensions between east and west in the runup to the schism of 1054; Krallis discusses the civil versus military elites and offers a ‘republican’ reading of Attaleiates; Ryder discusses the ecclesiastical conflict between Alexios I and Leo of Chalcedon; and Frankopan examines the make-up of the imperial administration, before and after 1094.

The fourth thematic cluster, ‘The age of spirituality’, offers the voices of those for whom Psellos had little time and little use: monks, religious thinkers and pious laymen. It consists of three chapters: Krausmüller argues that monastic conformity becomes the rule in the eleventh century; Crostini analyses the social and pictorial image of the monk in eleventh-century sources; and Parpulov offers a fascinating insight into spiritual practices as reflected in Byzantine art of the period.

Not only does this volume have no pretensions to completeness, it also does not claim to present a comprehensive and rounded assessment of the issues at stake. Indeed, there is a fair amount of disagreement among the authors, which is only to be welcomed because scholarship thrives on argument and contention. There are differences of opinion on the concept of the eleventh century (long, short, extremely short); transformation and change versus the *longue durée*; internal reform versus external pressure; turmoil and upheaval versus ‘crisis? what crisis?’ There is also still a lot of Michael Psellus, even among those who wish to move forward and abandon the old Psellian paradigm. It is not only the eleventh century that is somehow somewhat in between; it is also current scholarship that, in its understanding of the period, sometimes wavers between opposite views. The optimist will say that we are on the brink of a paradigm shift; the pessimist

that we are stuck in the past. I would say that we are somewhere in between.

## Section I

### The Age of Psellos

# 1

## From ‘Encyclopaedism’ to ‘Humanism’

### The turning point of Basil II and the millennium

*Paul Magdalino*

Since the 1970s, the eleventh century has been central to the critique of the concept of an unchanging Byzantium, a critique that has become almost as much of a cliché as the dead horse that it continues to flog. The 45th Spring Symposium did not buck the trend; in its introductory blurb, and in placing Michael Psellos at the top of its agenda, it clearly signalled change, rather than continuity, as the salient characteristic of the period. Nor does the present chapter go against the flow; on the contrary, I wish to strengthen and clarify the paradigm that we owe to Lemerle and Kazhdan of the eleventh century as a period of change in Byzantine culture.<sup>1</sup> It is a paradigm to which I subscribed twenty years ago in my work on twelfth-century Byzantium,<sup>2</sup> and I returned to it recently, in a symposium on Byzantine poetry in the eleventh century. There I argued that poetry was a primary symptom and even a vehicle of cultural change.<sup>3</sup> Here I would like to go deeper and look at the dynamics of the process. I would like to suggest that the eleventh century was not just a period during which changes occurred, but that it began with a significant transition, a flip of the switch that differentiated the Byzantium that went before from the Byzantium that

came after. Crudely speaking, Byzantine elite culture passed from an age of classicism and encyclopaedism to an age of humanism and Hellenism, from which it never looked back.

This moment of cultural change is easy to miss, or to dismiss, because it occurred within a framework of strong institutional and ideological continuity. A particularly eloquent example from our period is the monastery of Stoudios.<sup>4</sup> As re-founded by Theodore the Studite, this had been the great powerhouse of coenobitic monasticism in the ninth century, second only to the patriarchal Church in consolidating the Triumph of Orthodoxy after iconoclasm – and particularly successful in promoting its image through hagiography.<sup>5</sup> Its presence and influence were as visible as ever in the decades around the year 1000. The extended version of its *typikon*, composed in the late tenth century, served as the template for many new monastic foundations in Constantinople and beyond.<sup>6</sup> A Studite monk was sent to regulate the affairs of Mount Athos in 972.<sup>7</sup> Shortly afterwards, another Studite, Anthony, became Patriarch Anthony III,<sup>8</sup> and in 1025 two successive abbots of Stoudios were appointed to the sees of Antioch and Constantinople respectively.<sup>9</sup> The patriarch of Constantinople in question, Alexios, not only founded a monastery whose *typikon*, based on the Studite rule, was translated into Slavonic,<sup>10</sup> but also did much to sharpen the intolerance of heresy that resulted in the schism of 1054.<sup>11</sup> We may recall that the monk who debated with Cardinal Humbert in 1054 was another Studite, Niketas Stethatos. So too was his spiritual father, Symeon the New Theologian, whose hagiography he wrote and whose voluminous writings he published. Part of his agenda in writing Symeon's *Life* was to defend Symeon's action in creating a cult of his own spiritual father, Symeon Eulabes. This elder Symeon, although a solitary urban ascetic and possibly a holy fool, had himself belonged to the Studite community.<sup>12</sup>

All these 'graduates' of the Stoudios were, in their different ways, exponents of Orthodoxy, and Orthodoxy, or more precisely the culture of Orthodoxy, was the main thing they had in common with the rest of the educated elite who staffed the institutions of church and state – past, present

and future. In my work on the twelfth century, I entitled my chapter on intellectual culture ‘the guardians of Orthodoxy’,<sup>13</sup> and revisiting the question today I see no reason to discard the formula. Orthodoxy was the single most distinctive badge of identity displayed by the Byzantine ‘intelligentsia’ from the ninth to the fifteenth century, whatever their other identities and interests. Their ultimate justification for their education in the ‘outer learning’ of classical *paideia* was its usefulness as an adjunct to expounding the word of God, and, by extension, the writ of the ‘holy emperor’ who ruled in God’s image. If we look at the written profile of the leading intellectuals in each century from 843 to 1453, we can see that each of them proclaimed a commitment to Orthodoxy and a readiness to jump to its defence: Photios in the ninth, Arethas and Niketas the Paphlagonian in the tenth, even Psellos in the eleventh, Prodromos and Eustathios in the twelfth, Blemmydes in the thirteenth, Gregoras in the fourteenth, and even Plethon in the fifteenth.<sup>14</sup> The culture of Orthodoxy was a continuum that spanned the centuries from the end of iconoclasm to the end of Byzantium.

But if the culture of Orthodoxy – the imperative of right thinking, the importance of being Orthodox – did not waver, becoming, if anything, more rigid with time, the Orthodoxy of culture – the definition and content of right thinking – became increasingly flexible, diverse and inclusive of contradictions.<sup>15</sup> Orthodoxy remained a sanctum to which the Byzantine intelligentsia rallied when it was perceived to be under threat, or when they were accused of straying too far outside. At the same time, they readily moved from the core area of political and religious correctness into the surrounding grey area of the peripheral zone, which it was their duty, as guardians of Orthodoxy, to patrol. In their own terms, they blurred the boundaries separating the inner from the outer wisdom. Put differently, they found more time for the medium than the message, and what ultimately interested them was their control of and access to the media: their mastery of *logos*, *techne*, and *episteme*. Peer recognition of skills came to matter as much as dedication to a master or a cause; the first duty of a *logios* was to his *techne* and *episteme*. This was the balance that tipped between the age of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the age of Michael Psellos. The shift can be

measured in terms of many differences: the end of encyclopaedism, the re-engagement with philosophy,<sup>16</sup> the rehabilitation of Hellenism,<sup>17</sup> the rise of literary self-assertiveness and the authorial ego.<sup>18</sup>

Instead of returning to these developments, which have been well studied and are well known, I would like to pick out one smaller thread that perfectly illustrates the widening gap between the culture of Orthodoxy and the Orthodoxy of culture. This is the changing emphasis in the image of St Gregory of Nazianzos, surnamed the Theologian, who was the Orthodox Church Father par excellence.<sup>19</sup> Leading writers of the tenth century, Niketas the Paphlagonian, Theodore Daphnopates, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus wrote encomia of the saint that were highly polished but conventionally hagiographical celebrations of Gregory as bishop, ascetic, and defender of Orthodoxy.<sup>20</sup> A century later, Psellos wrote a piece that was entirely devoted to praising Gregory as a master of rhetorical style, who surpassed all the rhetors and philosophers of antiquity through his gift for harmonizing words and expressing complex ideas in clear, elegant prose.<sup>21</sup> Niketas the Paphlagonian had likened Gregory to a host of Old Testament worthies – for example, he had been like Gideon in his smiting of Julian the Apostate. Psellos compared Gregory with Plato, Plutarch, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, and other classical authors. Psellos admires Gregory for what he says, but even more for the way he says it. ‘Whenever I encounter him, I engage with him at once, at first for philosophical instruction, and then for recreation. I am filled with inexpressible delight and gratification. I often forget what I am trying to read, and straying from the theological ideas I am lost in the rose garden of the words and my senses are captivated’.<sup>22</sup> Psellos comes close to hagiography when he writes that Gregory derived his eloquence, like his ideas, not from the imitation of classical models, but from a heavenly source, that he was his own archetype.<sup>23</sup> But this is reminiscent of what Psellos writes in the *Chronographia* about himself and his own ‘lonely mission’ to reopen the springs of learning.<sup>24</sup> He also credits Gregory with another of his own preoccupations: the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy, and the importance of expressing the difficult ideas of the

latter with the rosy grace of the former.<sup>25</sup> So Psellos effectively constructs the Theologian as a role model and a justification for his own intellectual priorities.

Yet Psellos was not the only or the first Byzantine intellectual to adopt the Theologian as an exemplar of qualities other than his Orthodox theology. Psellos' contemporary John Mauropous was clearly inspired by Gregory's example in writing autobiographical poetry, and in justifying his resignation from his bishopric.<sup>26</sup> As an autobiographical poet with a big debt to the Theologian, Mauropous had been anticipated by John Geometres, who also anticipated Psellos in comparing Gregory with ancient non-Christian writers.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the idea that the Theologian was a better model of Attic eloquence than any classical rhetorician had already been stated, in the generation between Geometres and Psellos, by the teacher of rhetoric John Sikeliotes, who in his lectures on Hermogenes systematically promoted Gregory at the expense of Demosthenes as a model of rhetorical eloquence.<sup>28</sup>

As we shall see, Sikeliotes used the example of Gregory of Nazianzos to formulate an ideology of *politikos logos*, thus inaugurating the revival of the Second Sophistic that culminated in what has recently been characterized as the 'civic humanism' of the late Byzantine city.<sup>29</sup> But first we must look at the rest of the evidence for the turning point that he reflects. There are other signs of a growing sophistication, self-confidence and professionalism on the part of Byzantine intellectuals in the decades around the year 1000. The history of Leo the Deacon marks a significant step away from the wooden moralizing that characterizes both the biography and the chronography of the mid-tenth century towards the more graphic and nuanced modes of depiction and portrayal that distinguish the best of Byzantine historiography of the following centuries.<sup>30</sup> Leo the Deacon also displays a remarkable sense of professional ethics when he criticizes two eminent intellectuals at the court of John I Tzimiskes for interpreting the comet of 975 in a way that flattered the emperor and not as their *techne* required.<sup>31</sup> The letters that Leo, bishop of Synada, wrote during his diplomatic mission to Rome are remarkable for the deadpan irony with which the author reports on his

success in installing the emperor's candidate for the papacy, the despicable Philagathos, at the expense of the worthy and rightful incumbent.<sup>32</sup> Many of the poems of John Geometres anticipate the intimate humanism that makes the poetry of Christopher Mitylenaios and John Mauropous so appealing to the modern reader.<sup>33</sup> The poems in which he argues that the pursuit of arms and learning should go together are eloquent pieces of thinking, or at least talking, outside the box.<sup>34</sup> We should also note that he wrote several short poems in praise of the ancient philosophers,<sup>35</sup> and his epigrams declaring that Constantinople has replaced Athens effectively add a new dimension to the capital city's virtual identity as New Rome and New Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup> Justinian and Romanos the Melodist would not have approved.

These new expressions of creative and critical thinking in classical mode coincide with the end of the so-called encyclopaedism of the tenth century, whose final projects date from the last quarter of the century and the very first years of the eleventh: the Metaphrastic Menologion,<sup>37</sup> the *Souda*,<sup>38</sup> the *Patria*<sup>39</sup> and the *Praecepta militaria* of Nikephoros Ouranos. I do not think that the coincidence is accidental, and I would suggest that it represents the mode and the moment of significant transition in Byzantine intellectual culture. I have argued elsewhere that the encyclopaedism of the long tenth century, which begins with Photius, was a sustained, top-down, comprehensive programme aimed at consolidating the Triumph of Orthodoxy by the imposition of a national, Orthodox culture assembled from the legacy of late antiquity.<sup>40</sup> In terms of the distinction that I proposed earlier, it was driven by the culture of Orthodoxy and its objective was to establish Orthodoxy of culture. The revival and promotion of classical *paideia* were an integral part of this programme, and its ideological purpose is clearly evident from *Theophanes Continuatus'* account of the new academy established by Constantine VII: the emperor wanted to revive education because he knew that the *praxis* cultivated by rhetoric and the *theoria* cultivated by philosophy endear us to God; he looked after the students in his household; when they graduated, he appointed them to important administrative positions as judges and bishops, 'and he adorned

and enriched the Roman state with *sophia*'.<sup>41</sup> In other words, classical education, just like the classicizing style in the arts of the ‘Macedonian Renaissance’, and the collections of ancient sculptures used to decorate palace buildings and gardens, was meant to give the apparatus of the Christian empire a traditional décor, to authenticate its return to the state of grace from which it had fallen in the troubled centuries of the Arab conquests and iconoclasm. In terms of the other keywords of Byzantine state ideology, the outer learning had an important if peripheral role in promoting the *taxis* and *eutaxia* that kept the πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς and his subjects in harmony with the Kingdom of Heaven and prepared them to ‘receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by the angelic hosts’ (ώς τὸν βασιλέα τῶν ὅλων ὑποδεξόμενοι, ταῖς ἀγγελικαῖς τάξεσι ὀφράτως δορυφορούμενος).<sup>42</sup>

It is clear that during the age of encyclopaedism, Byzantine graduates were fully committed to working for the ideology of the imperial theocracy, whether in serving as bishops and civil servants, or in delivering occasional rhetoric, or in contributing to one encyclopaedic project or another. But it is also clear that as encyclopaedism petered out in the late tenth century, while they continued to write for the institutions that employed them, they increasingly set their own intellectual agenda, and used their intellectual skills not just to Atticize the image of the emperor and the saints, but also to entertain each other and establish a climate of complicity as well as competition with their peers. The medium was becoming the message. We can see this happening in the writings of Leo the Deacon, Leo of Synada, John Geometres and John Sikeliotes. The question is now, why did it happen when it did?

Part of the answer is implicit in the process of cultural evolution defined by Kazhdan<sup>43</sup>: this was the point when the revival of learning came of age; when the copying and imitation of ancient models gave way to a more mature and creative use of ancient idiom; in short, when the investment in learning began to pay dividends. In particular, the late tenth century was the time when the graduates of Constantine VII’s palace academy were rising through the system and would have been forming networks of sophisticated

complicity.<sup>44</sup> But palace schools had existed before, and had come and gone without any measurable effect. In addition to the process of natural evolution, we should pay attention to important events that occurred around the turn of the millennium.

One, which was as important as its effects are intangible, was the millennium itself: the arrival of the significant anniversaries of Christ's Incarnation and Ascension, which in the Byzantine calendar fell in 992 and 1026 respectively.<sup>45</sup> There is plenty of evidence that the Byzantines expected these dates with apprehension. Their likely impact on the Byzantine collective mentality, and on Byzantine intellectual culture is very hard to assess. It was not the first time that the end of the world was awaited, and eventually failed to materialize. However, it is not unlikely that the unprecedented flurry of astrological activity visible under Basil II reflects increased attention to the movements of the heavens and to the incidence of planetary conjunctions that might be associated with cosmic convulsion.<sup>46</sup> This is all the more likely in view of the fact that Basil's reign was a lean time for other types of culture. I would re-float the idea that the 'Macedonian Renaissance' was itself a prophylactic strategy of putting the empire in order as a preparation for the end of the world in the year 1000 – or rather, as a means of averting, or postponing the end of the world. Given that according to all Bible-based apocalyptic prophecies, the Reign of Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ could not occur during the lifetime of the Roman empire, as the last foreordained world power, the Byzantine leadership had a double incentive, during the run-up to the millennium, to demonstrate that the empire was alive and well, united, authentic and Orthodox. Alternatively and additionally, there was another narrative to adopt: the idea, which had circulated since at least the sixth century, that the Christian Roman empire was a different kind of beast from its pagan predecessor; rather than being the fourth and last of the transitory world powers, it was the one that would replace them all and last for ever, the Kingdom of Christ and the saints. All members of the Byzantine establishment had some kind of vested interest in subscribing to these pious hopes, which were implicit in the cultural investment of the 'Macedonian

Renaissance'. The existence of the pious hopes is not disproved by the appearance, in three works datable to the tenth century, of statements that contradict them. In his commentary on the Old Testament prophets, Basil of Neopatras repeats the assertion that the Roman empire is the Kingdom of the Saints in Daniel's prophecy,<sup>47</sup> but nevertheless insists that the reign of Antichrist will occur and must be at hand since the millennium is approaching, and the world is full of chaos.<sup>48</sup> In the *Life of Andreas Salos*, which was published (or possibly re-issued) in an expensive new edition around the 960s, the saint affirms that Constantinople will endure until the end of time, under the special protection of the Mother of God, but at the end it will be hurled like a millstone into the depths of the sea.<sup>49</sup> Andreas further dashes the pious hope, expressed in a question put to him by the narrator, that Hagia Sophia and the other churches will be spared: only the column of Constantine will remain above water.<sup>50</sup> In the context of the 'Macedonian Renaissance', this response effectively negated any idea that cultural investment in tradition and *taxis* could be an antidote or a prophylactic against apocalyptic destruction, that the church buildings and relics of Constantinople made it the New Jerusalem rather than Babylon the Great. The ultimate (and perhaps imminent) destruction of Constantinople was certainly self-evident to the author of the *Patria*, one of the last tenth-century 'encyclopaedias', writing in 995. He even implies that it was programmed by Constantine, in the prophecies encoded in the sculptures of the Forum, the Hippodrome and the Philadelphion.<sup>51</sup> Here we are reminded of the invention, by another contemporary author, of the horoscope of Constantinople, forecasting for the city a life of 696 years.<sup>52</sup>

It is significant that all these anticipations of doomsday are expressed in texts without any pretensions to classical knowledge or eloquence. This does not mean that learned men were oblivious to doomsday. The preface of Leo the Deacon's history proves otherwise, but it also shows that Attic discourse was not the right medium for writing about the end of the world. According to Leo, writing around the year 1000, it seemed to many of his contemporaries that the extraordinary upheavals of his lifetime – frightful portents in the heaven, unbelievable earthquakes, thunderbolts, torrential

rains, wars, troop movements, mass migrations – were signs that the Second Coming was at hand.<sup>53</sup> He decided to write about them so that they would not be forgotten in case Providence had decreed otherwise. So classicizing historiography was the medium for writing about events that did not prove to be the end of the world. It was the medium by which learned men distanced themselves from the mood of ‘apocalypse now’, and from both the fears and the pious hopes that it engendered.

Leo the Deacon wrote his history for posterity, and also, no doubt, to be read by specific friends and colleagues. He did not write it for the reigning emperor, Basil II. In fact, very few people did write for Basil II, apparently because Basil II did not encourage it. This brings us to the other main factor that affected Byzantine intellectual life around the turn of the millennium: the lack of patronage. The encyclopaedic projects of the tenth century had been directed by two principal figures, the emperor Constantine VII and the quasi-imperial eunuch minister Basil the *parakoimomenos*, who had acquired wealth and dispensed patronage on an imperial scale from before 959 until 985, when Basil II sacked him.<sup>54</sup> The void caused by the *parakoimomenos*’ fall from power is palpable in the literature of the next fifteen years: in the poems of John Geometres, in the vagaries of the Metaphrastic Menologion, in the *Patria*, and in the history of Leo the Deacon. John Geometres lost his job, and his Maecenas who rewarded him for writing encomia.<sup>55</sup> The hagiographical project of Symeon Metaphrastes, having been commissioned by the *parakoimomenos*, was brutally terminated by Basil II.<sup>56</sup> The author of the *Patria* pays discreet tribute to the *parakoimomenos* by mentioning that he had occupied the house originally owned by the fifth-century general Aspar – also a victim of an emperor’s purge brought on by resentment at his position as a power behind the throne.<sup>57</sup> Basil’s house is again mentioned by Leo the Deacon in a clear expression of regret for the passing of the *parakoimomenos*. Writing about the shooting star that appeared during Basil II’s disastrous campaign against the Bulgarians in 986, Leo gives examples from history to show that such phenomena heralded the ‘total destruction of what lay below’. And he adds, ‘And we ourselves saw such a star descending upon the house of the

*proedros* Basil, and, after only a short time passed, he departed this life and his property was plundered and looted'.<sup>58</sup> Interesting here is not only the implicit identification of Basil's fall as a national disaster, comparable to the rout of the imperial army, but also the implicit association between the fall of the *parakoimomenos* in 985 and the death of Constantine VII in 959, with which Leo the Deacon opens his narrative, noting that it had been marked, like his birth, by the appearance of a comet.<sup>59</sup>

The consequences of Basil's departure from the cultural scene are nicely summed up by Psellos in his famous description of the situation during the thirty years of Basil II's personal reign:

Neither did he pay attention to learned men, but he held this sector of society, I mean the intelligentsia, in complete contempt. So I find it amazing that while the emperor had so little regard for the study of letters, there was no little flourishing of philosophers and rhetoricians during these years. I can think of only one solution to this puzzle that causes me such amazement, but the explanation, if I may say so, is most exact and true. This is that the men of that time engaged in learning for its own sake and for no other purpose. However, most people do not approach education in this way, but they regard literary culture first and foremost as a source of income, and study letters to this end; and if the end is not immediately forthcoming, they give up from the start.<sup>60</sup>

Some Byzantinists have wondered about the reliability and the exact significance of these statements. However, the idea that Basil II was indifferent, if not downright inimical, to literary men is supported by John Geometres' bitter comments about the wicked Pharaoh who has condemned him to a cruel old age, and who, like the shameless citizens (of Constantinople), hates virtue, learning and success.<sup>61</sup> To these allusions, which were pointed out by Marc Luxtermann, we may add the testimony of the rhetorician John Sikeliotes, who flourished sometime between Geometres and Psellos.<sup>62</sup> In his lectures, on the Περὶ ἴδεῶν of Hermogenes, Sikeliotes explains why he has not written a commentary on the rhetorical technique of Gregory of Nazianzos: it is not worth his while, and no one in power would appreciate it.

I am not one of the well-off, but one of those who hardly survive on the basic necessities. I shirk the task. For suppose I were to analyse even just one of the most important orations according to the principles recommended by the marvellous Hermogenes, 'Where is the wise man, where is the

debater?’, as the sacred word says,<sup>63</sup> where is there an emperor Marcus or Antoninus, or Hadrian, or a patriarch, or anyone who excels in deeds rather than words, to provide an incentive? But all [now], so to speak, are devourers of the people, who reduce their subjects to the same level of ignorance, as if they are afraid and ashamed of ruling people who are better than them.<sup>64</sup>

It cannot be proved that the regime in question was that of Basil II, but this seems likely in view of the fact that Sikeliotes criticized the work of John Geometres, and was himself criticized for this by Psellos, who refers to both in a way suggestive of familiar figures who were not his own exact contemporaries<sup>65</sup>; this would place Sikeliotes’ activity in the period 1000–30. Indeed, since Psellos had read both authors, we may reasonably conclude that they were among the sources for his remarks on the literary patronage of Basil II.

Why did Basil II have such an aversion to classical *paideia*, which was not typical of Byzantine emperors, and especially not his own dynasty? It surely had something to do with his vindictive determination to erase the legacy of Basil the *parakoimomenos*.<sup>66</sup> I would also connect it to the other singular idiosyncrasy of Basil II: his abstinence from marriage, and I would interpret both denials as the deliberate adoption of a puritan style of asceticism designed to make the emperor, and the empire, pleasing to God, at a highly apocalyptic moment. In this way, the millennium factor and the patronage factor may have been connected. Basil II does not come across, from Psellos and Skylitzes, as the sort of emperor who would have suffered from apocalyptic angst, but there are indications that the historians under-represent the conventional piety that went with the tough military image.<sup>67</sup>

What then do we make of the second part of Psellos’ statement, his explanation of the ‘paradox’ of Basil II’s reign? Did rhetoric and philosophy flourish in spite of the lack of patronage because the learned men were interested in learning for its own sake? Or was this just Psellos’ idealized view of the situation, a complement to his back-handed idealization of the tight ship of state run by Basil II? Again, some confirmation can be found in the work of John Sikeliotes, in the second personal digression that he allows himself in his lecture on the all-important Hermogenic ideal of versatility

(δεινότης). Sikeliotes cites his own example to convince his students of the need to work hard to cultivate this ideal.

We must learn by reading books, and train and exercise ourselves in writing declamations, and with great diligence research and think about how something is said, conceived, and phrased by an ancient author, and for what reason it is here like this, and elsewhere like that. We must do this even if the gain to be got from it is not obvious. For not to be sluggish, and not to bury the cognitive faculty of the soul in idleness and carelessness, is of great worth and befitting to a real man. Besides, if we are faced with a sudden need that requires us to write a speech addressing someone, whether in jest, or teasing, or for a serious purpose, we should not be at a loss and ashamed, neither should we bring shame on the reputation that we bear from being called rhetors or philosophers. For this is a great source of honour and pleasure, as well as renown. Sensible soldiers in time of war do not spend their days in dissolute relaxation and neglect their arms and drill, but they practise and exercise in warfare before the battle, so to speak, that they may be properly prepared in an emergency. So it was when I visited one of the leading senators. I thought myself unworthy to bear the name and fame of philosophy,<sup>68</sup> since I was not being despised on account of my poverty and inglorious status, if I was considered to have nothing but the empty reputation. Thus I declaimed impromptu the discourse on the horse, and to another [senator] the discourse against the Saracens, not having prepared or planned anything in advance, but automatically, as if stripping off for a game. In the same way I demolished the myth of Prometheus with a wealth of philosophical and allegorical explanations of every kind. I might recall also my second imperial oration,<sup>69</sup> which I was bidden to deliver at *ta Pikridiou*,<sup>70</sup> and which began thus, ‘Speeches of address, O emperor, avoid lengthy subjects’. Yet I gained no advantage from this in life, struggling as I do with extreme and unremitting destitution, both I and my colleagues. I have related all this, not to promote myself, as the saying goes, ‘like Astydamas, woman, you praise yourself’,<sup>71</sup> because there will never be anyone more undistinguished than me (anyway, I have spent most of my life in captivity and sickness), but in order to show that it is necessary to endure the labour of science and learning without payment, even if nothing profitable seems likely to come of it, so that we may study, read attentively and write accordingly, receiving the glory that derives from this as a sufficient reward.<sup>72</sup>

This is effectively a manifesto for the pursuit of learning for its own sake, which tends to confirm Psellos’ explanation for the paradox of rhetoric and philosophy flourishing under Basil II. Moreover, Sikeliotes himself evokes the paradox, in that he presents the rhetoric he teaches as being intrinsically worth far more than the material recognition it receives. He describes this rhetoric as *politikos logos*, and the social and intellectual claims he makes for it are not modest.<sup>73</sup> He compares the parts of speech to the parts of the human body,<sup>74</sup> and likens the skilful rhetor to a master architect or a great general:

like they say Cyrus was, or Hannibal, or the ancient Romans along with the great Belisarios, so a rhetor if he is versatile – that is learned, wise, expert, faultless, a scientist and an artist, who uses the matters of rhetoric and their components to proper effect. The matters of rhetoric are those that maintain human life, body and soul, in war and peace.<sup>75</sup>

Yet *politikos logos* does not just regulate the material affairs of men, but elevates them to a higher, spiritual plane. ‘This is the real *politikos logos*, that which bestows legal equality on the forces of human souls, the intellectual cities’.<sup>76</sup> Thus *politikos logos* in its highest form is *politike episteme*,<sup>77</sup> and its highest exponents are *politikoi philosophoi*: after Themistokles and Demosthenes, the great teachers of the Church, Basil, Chrysostom, and, above all Gregory of Nazianzos.<sup>78</sup> Sikeliotes quotes the Theologian on almost every page, and in more than one passage he explains why Gregory is the greatest – why Demosthenes, the model of *politikos logos* constantly cited by Hermogenes, had to be dethroned. Gregory was more appropriate to a society ruled by an emperor rather than a democracy.<sup>79</sup> He had developed *politikos logos* into something new and sublime, because he had spoken about more sublime subject matter, and he had to win over a more varied, daunting and demanding audience. ‘[He was speaking] not to 1500 councillors, but to a whole imperial city that was like a second world; to consuls and top-ranking officials who were the masters of learning’.<sup>80</sup>

It is hard to escape the suspicion that John Sikeliotes’ sustained manifesto for the political importance of rhetoric was the fruit of his bitter experience of the dearth of cultural patronage under Basil II; that it was itself a rhetorical construction formulated in response to the undervaluation of public oratory by the political authorities at the beginning of the eleventh century. Three things in this manifesto were significant for the future of Byzantine literary culture. The first is the elision of rhetoric and philosophy, *techne* and *episteme*, which puts the sophist on a par with the philosopher, and thus refutes Plato’s dismissal of rhetoric as an inferior, ‘shadowy’ business. Second, the art of oratory is advocated not as an adjunct to Orthodox preaching and doctrine, but as a civic, secular institution that deserves the patronage of emperors such as Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius – in other words, it is put forward as a continuation or revival of the Second

Sophistic. Third, the supreme exponents of this ‘Third Sophistic’ are the Fathers of the Church, and above all St Gregory of Nazianzos, the Theologian.

In celebrating Gregory of Nazianzos as the ultimate sophist, Sikeliotes was in one sense completing the Christianization of Hellenic *paideia* that the Fathers had begun, putting in place the final stone in the edifice erected by the culture of Orthodoxy after iconoclasm. In another sense, however, he was Hellenizing the Theologian by delineating Gregory as the culmination of ancient *paideia*, who realized more perfectly than the ancients the virtues and techniques prescribed by ancient theorists. There is no suggestion that Gregory had rendered those techniques redundant by his achievement as a bishop, a dogmatist and a saint; in fact, these roles are incidental to his professionalism. Or rather, they make his professionalism ideologically correct, and justify the inclusion of the ‘outer wisdom’, in which he excelled, within the Orthodoxy of culture. It was but a short step from there to arguing, as Mauropus would do in the next generation, that noble Hellenes, like Plato and Plutarch, should be spared the fire of eternal damnation.<sup>81</sup> The way was also open for another man of the next generation, who had certainly read Sikeliotes, if he had not been taught by him, to aspire to achieve the intellectual excellence and influence of Gregory of Nazianzos without the episcopal career and without the sainthood. This was the not quite so lonely mission of Michael Psellos.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977). The most complete statement of Kazhdan’s thesis is in A. Kazhdan and A.W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> While arguing, *contra* Lemerle, that the twelfth century was not a period of reaction against the eleventh-century progress: P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 489.

- [3](#) P. Magdalino, ‘Cultural Change? The Context of Byzantine Poetry from Geometres to Prodromos’, in F. Bernard, K. Demoen (eds), *Poetry and its Contexts in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Farnham, 2012), 19–36.
- [4](#) A comprehensive history of the monastery from its origins to 1204 is in preparation by Olivier Delouis.
- [5](#) O. Delouis, ‘Écriture et réécriture au monastère de Stoudios à Constantinople (IXe–Xe s.): quelques remarques’, in S. Marjanović-Dušanić and B. Flusin (eds), *Remanier, métaphraser* (Belgrade, 2011), 101–10.
- [6](#) D. Krausmüller, ‘The Abbots of Evergetis as Opponents of Monastic Reform: Monastic Discourse in 11th- and 12th-Century Constantinople’, *REB* 69 (2011), 111–24.
- [7](#) *Actes du Protaton*, ed. D. Papachryssanthou, Archives de l’Athos VII (Paris, 1975), no. 7.
- [8](#) Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), 311.
- [9](#) Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, 369; Yahya of Antioch, ‘Histoire’, ed. I. Kratschkovsky, tr. F. Micheaud and G. Troupeau, *Patrologia Orientalis* 47 (1997), 470–1; K.-P. Todt, ‘Das Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit’ (969–1084), *BZ* 94 (2001), 239–67, at 259.
- [10](#) A.M. Pentkovskij, *Tipikon patriarcha Aleksija Studita v Vizantii i na Rusi* (Moscow, 2001); for the presence of Studite monks in the episcopate of Kiev Rusi’ after the conversion, see A. Poppe, ‘Studity: prosvetiteljami Rusi’, *Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia 22–27 August 2011* (Sofia, 2011), I, 131–41.
- [11](#) F. Lauritzen, ‘Against the Enemies of Tradition: Alexios Studites and the Syno-dikon of Orthodoxy’, in A. Rigo and P. Ermilov (eds), *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Byzantium: The Definition and the Notion of Orthodoxy and some Other Studies on the Heresies and the Non-Christian Religions* (Rome, 2010), 41–8.
- [12](#) The literature on Symeon the New Theologian and Niketas Stethatos has grown exponentially in recent years. For the basic facts, see the entries in *ODB*.
- [13](#) Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel*, ch. 5.
- [14](#) See the references to these authors in the *ODB*.
- [15](#) For the distinction, see P. Magdalino, ‘Orthodoxy and Byzantine Cultural Identity’, in P. Ermilov and A. Rigo (eds), *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Byzantium* (Rome, 2010), 21–40.

- 16 J. Duffy, ‘Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos’, in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), 139–56.
- 17 A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2008).
- 18 See R. Macrides, ‘The Historian in the History’, in C.N. Constantinides, N.M. Panagiotakes, E. Jeffreys, A.D. Angelou (eds.), *ΦΙΛΑΕΛΛΗΝ: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning* (Venice, 1996), 205–24; M.D. Luxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (Vienna, 2003), 37–8.
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- 20 J.J. Rizzo, *The Encomium of Gregory Nazianzen by Nicetas the Paphlagonian*, Subsidia Hagiographica 58 (Brussels, 1976); Théodore Daphnopatès, *Correspondance*, ed. J. Darrouzès and L. Westerink (Paris, 1978), 143–5; B. Flusin, ‘Constantin Porphyrogénète: Discours sur la translation des reliques de saint Grégoire de Nazianze (BHG 728)’, *REB* 57 (1999), 5–97.
- 21 I have used the edition by A. Mayer, ‘Psellos’ Rede über den rhetorischen Charakter des Gregorios von Nazianz’, *BZ* 20 (1911), 27–100 (text 48–60); thorough discussion by Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos*.
- 22 Ed. Mayer, 49; Kaldellis, *Hellenism*.
- 23 Ed. Mayer, 51, 54.
- 24 Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. É. Renauld (Paris, 1926–8, repr. 1967), I, 135, 138.
- 25 Ed. Mayer, 54–5; cf. *Chronographia*, ed. Renauld, I, 137.
- 26 A. Karpozilos, *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous Metropolitan of Euchaita*, CFHB 34 (Thessaloniki, 1990), 33; Magdalino, ‘Cultural Change?’, 31–2.
- 27 Geometres, ed. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeva*, IV, 281, 302, 341; Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos*
- 28 Ed. C. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci* (Stuttgart, Tübingen and London, 1934), 56–504; T. Conley, ‘Demosthenes Dethroned: Gregory Nazianzus [sic] in Sikeliotes’ Scholia on Hermogenes’ Περὶ ἴδεων’, *Illinois Classical Studies* 27–8 (2002–3), 145–52. On Sikeliotes, see also S. Papaioannou, ‘Sicily, Constantinople, Miletos: The Life of a Eunuch and the History of Byzantine Humanism’, in

Th. Antonopoulou, S. Kotzabassi and M. Loukaki (eds), *Myriobiblos. Essays on Byzantine Literature and Culture*, Byzantinisches Archiv 29 (Berlin, 2015), 260–84, especially 274–7; P. Roilos, in T. Shawcross and I. Toth (eds), *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2017), Chapter 6.

- [29](#) N. Gaul, *Thomas Magistros und die späth byzantinische Sophistik: Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Wiesbaden, 2011).
- [30](#) A. Markopoulos, ‘Byzantine History Writing at the End of the First Millennium’, in Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 183–97.
- [31](#) Ed. C.B. Hase (Bonn, 1828), 168–9; tr. A.-M. Talbot and D.F. Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century* (Washington, DC, 2005), 210–11.
- [32](#) Ed. and tr. M.P. Vinson, *The Correspondence of Leo Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, CFHB 23 (Washington, DC, 1985), nos 6, 9, 11.
- [33](#) M.D. Lauxtermann, ‘John Geometres: Poet and Soldier’, *Byz* 68 (1998), 356–80; ‘Byzantine Poetry and the Paradox of Basil II’s Reign’, in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000* (Leiden, 2003), 201–16, at 212; Magdalino, ‘Cultural Change?’, 23, 25.
- [34](#) Ed. J.A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca e Codicibus Manuscriptis Bibliothecae Regiae Parisiensis* (Oxford, 1841, repr. Hildesheim, 1967), IV, 341–7.
- [35](#) Ed. Cramer, *Anecdota*, IV, 281 (Aristotle, Plato, Simplicius), 282 (Archytas, Plato, Aristotle), 284 (Simplicius, Porphyry), 312 (Philostratos, Libanius), 329 (Theon).
- [36](#) Ed. Cramer, *Anecdota*, IV, 315.
- [37](#) C. Høgel, *Simeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization* (Copenhagen, 2002); ‘Hagiography under the Macedonians’, in Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 217–32.
- [38](#) Ed. A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, 5 vols (Leipzig, 1928–38; repr. Stuttgart, 1971); cf. B. Baldwin, ‘Aspects of the Suda’, *Byz* 76 (2006), 11–31.
- [39](#) Ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, II (Leipzig, 1907). For the composition, sources and topographical information of the *Patria*, see G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire: Études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris, 1984); A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinopoleos* (Bonn, 1988).

[40](#) P. Magdalino, ‘Orthodoxy and History in Tenth-Century Byzantine “Encyclopedism”’, in P. Van Deun and C. Macé (eds), *Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 212 (Leuven, 2011), 143–59.

[41](#) *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 446.

[42](#) The quotation is from the Cherubic Hymn (Χερούβικόν), sung in the Divine Liturgy at the Great Entrance of the Divine Gifts. On the eschatological significance of the text and the moment, see P. Magdalino, ‘The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda’, in R. Beaton and C. Roueché (eds), *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol* (Aldershot, 1993), 3–33, at 16. On *taxis* and *eutaxia*, see Magdalino, ‘Orthodoxy and History’, 153.

[43](#) Kazhdan and Epstein, *Change*, ch. 4.

[44](#) Evidenced by the letter collections of the late tenth century: ed. J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* (Paris, 1960); Leo of Synada, *Correspondence*, ed. Vinson; M. Grünbart, ‘Byzantinische Briefflorilegien: Kopieren und Sammeln zur Zeit der Makedonienkaiser’, in Van Deun and Macé (eds), *Encyclopedic Trends*, 77–88.

[45](#) For what follows, see P. Magdalino, ‘The Year 1000 in Byzantium’, in Magdalino (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, 233–70.

[46](#) P. Magdalino, *L'orthodoxie des astrologues: La science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance* (Paris, 2006), 91–2.

[47](#) Cod. Patmiacus 31, fos. 255v–256r; Magdalino, ‘The Year 1000 in Byzantium’, 252.

[48](#) Cod. Patmiacus 31, fos. 256r–257r; Magdalino, ‘The Year 1000 in Byzantium’, 268–9. In this passage, the commentator identifies the Roman empire only as the Fourth Kingdom of Daniel’s prophecy, without distinguishing its Christian phase as he does earlier in his text.

[49](#) *The Life of St Andrew the Fool*, ed. and tr. L. Rydén, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 4 (Uppsala, 1995), II, 274–5.

[50](#) *Life of Andrew the Fool*, ed. Rydén, II, 276–9.

[51](#) Ed. Preger, *Scriptores*, 176–7, 178, 191, 206, 268–9.

[52](#) Magdalino, *L'orthodoxie des astrologues*, 87–8.

[53](#) Ed. Hase, 4.

[54](#) The literature on Basil the *parakoimomenos* is vast and growing. Among recent publications, see Magdalino, ‘Orthodoxy and Byzantine Cultural Identity’, 39–40; S.H. Wander, *The Joshua Roll* (Wiesbaden, 2012), 93–138; L. Bevilacqua, ‘Basilio “parakoimomenos”, l’aristocrazia e la passion per le arti sotto i Macedoni’, in A. Acconcia Longo, G. Cavallo, A. Guiglia, A. Iacobini (eds), *La Sapienza bizantina: Un secolo di ricerche a l’università di Roma*, Milion 8 (Rome, 2012), 183–202.

[55](#) Luxtermann, ‘John Geometres’.

[56](#) According to the Georgian translator Eprem Mtsire, the work was commissioned by the emperor in 982, at the time when Basil the *parakoimomenos* was in power, but ordered to be burned when Symeon lost favour at court: Høgel, ‘Hagiography under the Macedonians’, 221, 223. It is thus likely, though not proven, that he was disgraced like John Geometres because he had been part of the *parakoimomenos*’ ‘faction’.

[57](#) Preger, *Scriptores*, 188; *PLRE*, I, 164–9.

[58](#) Ed. Hase, 173; tr. Talbot and Sullivan, 214.

[59](#) Ed. Hase, 5; tr. Talbot and Sullivan, 57.

[60](#) Ed. Renauld, I, 18 (my translation).

[61](#) Ed. Cramer, *Anecdota*, IV, 290–1, 292; ed. E.M. van Opstall, *Jean Géomètre: Poèmes en hexamètres et en distiques élégiaques* (Leiden, 2008), 226–35, 238–9, 248–51; Luxtermann, ‘John Geometres’.

[62](#) See Papaioannou, ‘Sicily’, and Roilos (n. 28).

[63](#) 1 Cor. 1, 20.

[64](#) Ed. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, VI, 444–5. For the dating of Geometres’ activity to the period 963–1000, see Luxtermann, ‘John Geometres’. Psellos was 25 years old in 1043 (*Chronographia*, ed. Renauld, I, 134), which makes it possible but unlikely that he had been taught by Sikeliotes.

[65](#) Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, I, ed. P. Gautier (Leipzig, 1989), no. 47, 180.

[66](#) Psellos, *Chronographia*, I, 12–13.

[67](#) B. Crostini, ‘The Emperor Basil II’s Cultural Life’, *Byz* 66 (1996), 55–80; Magdalino, ‘The Year 1000 in Byzantium’, 257–8, 263–4.

[68](#) Psellos, *Theologica*, I, ed. Gautier, says that Sikeliotes styled himself a philosopher, although he wanted to be a sophist.

[69](#) Μέμνημαι δ' ἐγώ ποτε καὶ τὸν βασίλειον τὸν δεύτερον. It is presumably a reading of βασίλειον as a proper name that lies behind the general assumption that the emperor praised in the oration was Basil II: Conley, ‘Demosthenes Dethroned’, 146; Lauxtermann, ‘Byzantine Poetry’, 214. The probability that Basil was the emperor in question rests on the chronology of Sikelioites relative to Geometres and Psellos.

[70](#) A monastery north of the Golden Horn in the European suburbs of Constantinople: R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin, I: Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique, III: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), 403–4.

[71](#) Philemon fr. 190; cited by Photios, *Lexicon* and *Suidas (Souda)* under σαυτήν.

[72](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 447–8.

[73](#) For discussion, see P. Roilos (n. 28).

[74](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 60–1, 62.

[75](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 448–9.

[76](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 467.

[77](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 56.

[78](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 57, 450–1, 466, 468.

[79](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 472.

[80](#) Walz, *Rhetores*, VI, 453–4.

[81](#) Ed. P. de Lagarde, *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in codice vaticano graeco 676 supersunt* (Göttingen, 1882), no. 43, 24.

## 2

# Michael Psellos and the Eleventh Century

## A double helix of reception

*Michael Jeffreys*

Michael Psellos dominates the history of the Byzantine eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> He was for nearly four decades (1041–78) a major actor on the Constantinopolitan scene, at times an influential advisor of emperors, at others out of favour: at several moments his role is controversial, and research cannot decide between disparate conclusions. He has left more than a thousand written treatises, large and small, in different genres, and more than 500 letters;<sup>2</sup> but though many of these writings have autobiographical content, no even half-satisfactory biography has been written. His dominance is most complete in an active sense of the word history – the written transmission to posterity of the political and cultural history of his day, defining culture very widely. He wrote the most attractive political history of the eleventh century, the *Chronographia*, which today in translation is one of the most widely read Byzantine books. But he has also transmitted eleventh-century thought and experience in the following special areas: philosophy and its history, the occult (alchemy, witches, demons and astrology), precious stones, systems of belief (including Christianity), monasticism, literary criticism, grammar, rhetoric, education, medicine, law, music, mathematics and astronomy. The list is not exhaustive.

The pretentious title of this chapter is intended to emphasize other features of the domination described. The first is its pervasiveness: Psellos did not win the 1962 Nobel Prize for Medicine, but he has an influence over the molecular structure of modern histories of his time that is more complete than that of any other historical politician and writer I can think of. What is more, twists and anomalies in the publication of his work affect every part of the subject of the present volume. Psellos' reception has been distorted by two chronological abnormalities, similar but with significant differences, which have not only affected the way in which he and his work have been understood, but have left on the historiography of the period a deep imprint which will not be fully erased for many decades.

As well as comprehensive breadth, his history also has depth. For example, the *Chronographia* is increasingly mistrusted as a factual record of events. Two or three other Byzantine histories are available as partial correctives for its defects in this respect. But different genres of Psellos' own writing are at least as useful for the purpose. In his many encomia of major personalities, rhetorical distortion is more predictable and easily remedied than in the *Chronographia*. His letters all retain his restricted knowledge and point of view at the moments when he wrote them, and the attitudes they show are much more convincingly historical than parts of the *Chronographia*. Details of Psellos' version of eleventh-century history are being replaced – but often by more Psellos.

As I said, the laying down of these major strata of historical infrastructure has been disrupted in two important ways. Psellos' history of the eleventh century influenced later Byzantine historians, particularly Zonaras, who incorporated bland summaries of events from the *Chronographia* in his own history, which was printed more than two centuries before the *Chronographia* itself. Skylitzes and Attaleiates both show reactions against Psellos. The *Chronographia* therefore, when it at last appeared in 1876, was greeted with disappointment, as it provided few facts or even opinions that were new. Crucially, since the story was familiar, the unconventional nature of its narrative passed unnoticed. Only recently have students of the *Chronographia* begun to question its purposes, leading to deconstruction of

some of its narratives by careful comparison with other texts and the techniques of postmodernist criticism. This must apply also to the material which Zonaras took from the *Chronographia*, which is embedded still more deeply in the Byzantine historical tradition.

Many other facets of eleventh-century *mentalités* covered by Psellos have been subject to a different distortion. Psellos was the favourite Byzantine author among the early printers, since his wide reading in ancient texts provided convenient access, sometimes the only access, to ancient wisdom on many subjects. Some eighty publications and Latin translations of his texts, large and small, were printed before 1700,<sup>3</sup> a number which no other Byzantine writer can even approach. Renaissance commentators had to decide whether to treat Psellos as the last of the ancients or the first of their interpreters for the modern world. Writers of the Renaissance used classical antiquity to break down medieval rigidities and make better sense of their world, via earlier frameworks of thought which now seemed very new. Psellos, who had begun to make similar experiments in the eleventh century, provided useful materials for the Renaissance project, and even some hints how to use them. But his role usually remained a name, a shadowy link without historical contextualization.

As European civilization moved from the Renaissance towards the Enlightenment, many works of Psellos were superseded by modern scientific thought and forgotten. The longest-lasting were those dealing with the occult, where he retained credibility for a time. Byzantine studies then turned from what might be directly and practically useful to modern readers towards the political history of Byzantium itself, where Psellos' contribution was made, as we have seen, first through Zonaras and others, and only later confirmed by the *Chronographia*. In the last century the singular project of Byzantine political history has become plural, as many human endeavours like philosophy, science and medicine have developed independent historical frameworks. Here Psellos has reappeared as a significant figure. But too often that figure is the Renaissance construct of an ahistorical link back to the ancient world. The Psellos of such histories badly needs to be grounded in the Byzantine eleventh century – a task made more problematic and

difficult by the absence of any satisfactory biography to link different facets of his personality and work.

## The *Chronographia*: delayed publication

The *Journal des Savants* for 1874–6 contained four book reviews by the distinguished academician Emmanuel Miller, welcoming five volumes being published in Venice and Paris by a young Greek philologist, Constantine Sathas, entitled *Μεσαιωνική βιβλιοθήκη* (*Medieval Library*).<sup>4</sup> The material of volumes I–III was of variable importance. But Miller stressed that IV and V contained major unpublished works of the great Byzantine writer Michael Psellos. Volume IV in particular published Psellos' *Chronographia*, which had long been awaited.

Miller summarized Sathas' 119-page introduction to the volume, written in learned Modern Greek. I shall take from it what we need for this chapter. Sathas begins by listing first editions of Byzantine historians. We may pick out three: the huge compilation of Zonaras, published by Hieronymus Wolf in Basel, for the first time naming the eastern Roman empire as 'Byzantium';<sup>5</sup> Kedrenos (nearly identical for this period to Skylitzes), published by Wilhelm Holzmann also in Basel;<sup>6</sup> and Attaleiates, put out by Immanuel Bekker in Bonn.<sup>7</sup> The political history of the eleventh century, before publication of Psellos' *Chronographia*, was based on Zonaras and Kedrenos–Skylitzes, with additions made much later from Attaleiates.

Sathas then gives a biography of Psellos, finally banishing a mistake that long confused Psellos studies. As well as the eleventh-century Psellos, a false earlier Psellos was created by misreading a manuscript note: he was apparently a monk on Andros who taught a wise man named Leo, either Leo the Mathematician, the ninth-century archbishop of Thessaloniki, or the emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912). Both false Pselloi were made authors of some of his work. These mistakes were broadly accepted, and only corrected by years of effort. Sathas' biography stressed the unity of Psellos' life and

work, and is still useful in other details, for it was Sathas who first published many of his texts. As we have seen, there is still no modern biography of Psellos, though the worst mistakes remaining in Sathas' work have been corrected.

The end of Sathas' introduction lists attempts to publish the *Chronographia*. An edition was first promised by Combefis in 1672, but he died before it was finished. This sequence of promise and disappointment was repeated several times in the next 200 years. Two kinds of difficulty, as we shall see, have delayed its publication: the intellectual challenge of the work, and the unusually disturbed text in the manuscript which is the unique source for most of the text. Other publications of his works have been delayed by investigation of their very wide manuscript attestation: for example, it was only in the 1990s that a satisfactory canon of his letters was completed. Many works have only appeared in critical editions in an American project started in the 1980s by Leendert Westerink, linked to the Teubner publishing house.<sup>8</sup> Other important works from volumes IV and V of the Medieval Library still await new editions, especially his letters and the long funerary biographies of the patriarchs Michael Kerouarios, Constantine Leichoudes and Ioannes Xiphilinos. The first volume of the latter project is now complete, as is a major new edition of the *Chronographia*.<sup>9</sup> The edition of the letters is well advanced.<sup>10</sup>

I have recently summarized Psellos' letters, which are badly understudied, so I speak from experience of his difficult Greek. The letters are learned, but quite informal. His vocabulary is often straightforward, but one must watch out for technical philosophical and rhetorical terms, not all of which are immediately obvious. There are few elaborate periods; he strings simple clauses together with participles, but with minimal guides to the syntax connecting them. He makes readers collaborate with him to make meaning, solving syntactical dilemmas. Does a participial clause have temporal, causal or concessive force? There are often no markers. He frequently uses unusual word order to emphasize something, but what? Some statements are outrageous, or self-contradictory: do we need a question mark? Is there irony? Is he quoting a letter just received, or another text he has read and

we cannot, because it is obscure, unpublished or lost? Is pointing in the manuscript any help? He compliments his readers by assuming they are as clever and widely read as he is. Most modern readers, especially myself, do not deserve the compliment, even when studying slowly with all the apparatus of modern scholarship. Usually we gradually solve the problems, and read highly intelligent and entertaining letters. Often we do not fully succeed, but still sense excitement from which we are excluded. Much the same was once true of the *Chronographia*. Now that it has been edited, re-edited and translated into most scholarly languages, its riddles are becoming fewer. In 1876 it was published by Sathas in Greek, with a Greek introduction but no translation. Thus the first impact of one of the best and most popular works of Byzantine history was disappointing.

The text itself was part of the problem. The late twelfth-century manuscript Parisinus graecus 1712 is our almost exclusive textual source.<sup>11</sup> The scribe's hand is fairly clear, but his text suffers from all regular orthographic errors dependent on developing medieval Greek phonology (replacement of vowels, diphthongs and consonants by others now sounded in a similar way). He also makes many errors which look, bizarrely, like the result of dictation to a scribe who is hard of hearing. He often substitutes words which have a similar sound to what Psellos wrote, or words from the same root which are a different part of speech or in a different person or case, with a different termination. Often the error is a genuine Greek form, but it does not fit the sentence. Sathas' job was thus very difficult: Miller described it as mucking out a new Augean stables,<sup>12</sup> and Sathas did not do it conscientiously. He also used an informal way of reporting manuscript readings, not the formal *apparatus criticus* of a proper edition. Early reviews complained that Sathas was unprofessional and too hasty in publishing, appending long lists of uncorrected errors.<sup>13</sup>

Twenty years later Sathas published a second edition in the London series of J.B. Bury, improving the *apparatus criticus* more than the text.<sup>14</sup> Thirty years after that, Émile Renauld published in Paris a new, two-volume edition with the *Chronographia*'s first translation into a modern language, French. His supercilious introduction again complained of Sathas' methods, calling

his edition ‘vulgarisation pur et simple’, mere popularization.<sup>15</sup> Sathas might have replied (posthumously) that he had at least published a text, two centuries after Combefis and fifty years before Renauld. Renauld’s work was probably over-scrupulous in reporting every tiny variation of spelling. Reviewers still criticized his edition and especially his translation, so that disinfection of the *Chronographia*’s text has continued, and has now reached another climax with Dieter Reinsch. Thus one reason why reaction to the *Chronographia* was muted was a sense it was not properly published. A difficult text was edited informally and rather carelessly. Another reason, as we have seen, was its content. J.B. Bury, in an essay foreshadowing Sathas’ second edition, makes a complaint echoed by several later reviewers that ‘This history was so diligently utilized by Zonaras that the original does not supply us with any new facts of any importance. But nevertheless it is invaluable for many interesting details, not to mention that the work of a contemporary has always a flavour that no compilation can have’.<sup>16</sup> The ‘contemporary flavour’ Bury mentioned has now been reinterpreted in postmodern terms.

‘Vulgarisation pur et simple’ has appeared again in the bibliography on Psellos. The most popular translation is that into English of E.R.S. Sewter.<sup>17</sup> This is not a professional scholarly version, as Cyril Mango pointed out in a dismissive review of a revised edition (1966). He concludes ‘It is a pity that one of the most difficult of Byzantine authors should have fallen into the hands of a translator who is clearly an amateur’.<sup>18</sup> Mango was right, as may be seen from the translator’s preface, as well as errors of methodology and detail in the English version itself. But that amateur, by boldly translating Psellos and Anna Komnene, and having them incorporated into the Penguin Classics series, has sold far more books than any professional, and brought Byzantine words before far more eyes than read professional books. I am not sure what conclusion to draw.

## Psellos, rhetoric and literature

At VI, 61 (Sewter, 185), Psellos makes the best-known learned reference in Byzantine literature. As Maria Skleraina, Constantine IX's mistress, was out walking, one educated courtier whispered to another only two words from a line of Homer, spoken by a Trojan noble about the beauty of Helen, who was brought to Troy by Paris – effective though indirect praise of Maria's beauty. To ensure that his readers got the point, Psellos gave Maria acute hearing and memory; she repeated the words exactly and later asked their meaning. Soon after, at VI, 65–8 (Sewter, 187–9), he uses a narrative technique that deserves to be just as famous. He is describing the imperial apartments, a curious *ménage à trois* in which Maria had first claim on visits to the emperor's room, and Zoe never entered it unless she was sure Maria was not there. Because Maria is visiting Constantine as Psellos is conducting a literary tour for his readers, he pauses his description and is forced to spend time speaking of Zoe's eccentricities. Later he loses patience and rouses the emperor and his mistress so that he and the readers can complete the tour.

Warned by this radical device, we may look for larger complexities. As another example, Psellos seems obsessed by the problem of objectivity in treating Constantine IX, the emperor responsible for his own high position at court. He returns to the issue more than once in weighing up the emperor's good and bad qualities. Efthymia Braounou-Pietsch,<sup>19</sup> using postmodern critical methods, has shown that his concern was basically bogus, and that the text deconstructs into criticism of Constantine. Psellos introduced the problem with a wordy introduction (VI, 22–35; Sewter, 165–73).<sup>20</sup> Later he ridiculed many of Constantine's links with worthless courtiers, but in his final judgements (VI, 161–91; Sewter, 240–54) he placed many of Constantine's silliest attitudes and actions on the positive side of his character, disorienting the reader and leaving a very poor impression of the emperor's judgement.

Similar methods appear outside the *Chronographia*. Psellos' entry to a monastery was delayed by concern for his adopted daughter Euphemia. He chose her a noble husband, Elpidios Kenchres, enriched him and made a formal betrothal. But Elpidios proved ineducable, persisted in bad habits and loathed his fiancée. To break the betrothal, Psellos arranged a court case

which he technically lost and paid a fine. In fact it enabled him to remove from Elpidios the status given him, free Euphemia and keep a high dignity for another potential husband. All this is reported in an authentic-looking court document, formally composed, written by Psellos himself. Commentators have puzzled how a principal in the trial could prepare its official summary. It has recently been proposed – surely correctly – that this legal oxymoron marks the document as bogus, a one-sided statement of Psellos' own case made more effective by its unexpected frame, but revealing its status to anybody who knew the rules.<sup>21</sup>

Stratis Papaioannou places great emphasis on another variation of Psellos' narrative, his explicit modification of the narrative voice, particularly with regard to gender.<sup>22</sup> Building on flexibility which is a traditional part of Greek rhetoric, Psellos repeatedly links himself to the feminine end of the continuum of gender, that which feels and shows emotion rather than the self-control and rationality characteristic (traditionally) of the male. Even the adoption of gender as a continuum rather than as bipolar absolutes shows originality. He speaks of some feelings – for example, his affection for young children – as deriving from his feminine nature, while in his philosophical work he feels more masculine. This leads him to regular complication of his rhetorical first person, a kind of ‘rhetorical transvestism’,<sup>23</sup> which allows him scope for introducing much greater suppleness and enjoyment into the narrative process. This is one of the traits that make his writing seem much more modern than that of his contemporaries. It is largely a matter of degree: traditional Byzantine rhetoric allowed exceptional use of feminine pathos at given moments, while Psellos felt able to switch to his less masculine and less traditional side whenever the fancy took him.

This flexibility has another side which becomes painfully obvious to anyone trying to translate or summarize his letters for a modern audience. They are dominated by the doctrine of *philia*, epistolary affection between males. It is extremely difficult to render Psellos' work into a modern language without giving an impression that this relationship was homoerotic. Yet homosexuality was anathema to the Orthodox Church, and

if Psellos' letters had given evidence to convict him of such practices, his clerical critics would have seized the opportunity. There is no such criticism; in fact, he was satirized for failing to stay in the monastery through lack of female company.<sup>24</sup> *Philia* has probably been documented and analysed more than any other Byzantine literary convention, especially using techniques derived from network analysis.<sup>25</sup> The cultural dynamics of its sexual dimension have recently been splendidly defined by Stratis Papaioannou.<sup>26</sup> Eroticism in much of middle Byzantine literature can be seen metaphorically as a series of performances of a conversation scripted between two loving friends, Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great, hallowed by the sanctity of the two speakers. Psellos chooses vocabulary and patterns of thought to locate his *philia* safely within that conversation, though he characteristically challenges the genre by adding other words to stress the physical end of the continuum of affection, as against the spiritual. It is particularly hard to translate striking homoerotic imagery used as a metaphor for intense asexual *philia*, a not uncommon feature of past literary traditions. Unfortunately for the translator, such metaphors are now virtually inaccessible, at least in English, since homosexual images automatically enrol a text either in a discourse of condemnation, or proud identification.

The pushing of such flexibility to its limits in every area of life is characteristic of Psellos. Papaioannou's conclusion catches the essence: 'What sets Psellos apart and is a consistent feature of his writing is his willingness to cross discursive boundaries and maximize the potential of rhetoric and his agility in activating a variety of beliefs and ethical patterns – often latent in the multifaceted discursive world in which he belonged'.<sup>27</sup> This is an important, maybe decisive, stage in the creation of fiction, especially in Greek, marking a key step on the journey from the medieval to the modern conception of literature.

## The occult

Recent study of the occult in Byzantium has countered any assumption of its marginal status by stressing the high social and intellectual level of practitioners whose names have survived.<sup>28</sup> Psellos is probably the most prominent and has the widest range. In some cases his role was vital in the preservation and continued discussion of crucial texts:

Single-handedly, Psellos was responsible for bringing back, almost from the dead, an entire group of occult authors and books. Between the time of Photios in the ninth and Psellos in the eleventh century, one would be hard put to it to find in extant Byzantine sources any references to Hermes Trismegistus and the *Hermetica*, to Julius Africanus and the *Kestoi*, to Proclus' *De arte hieratica*, or the Chaldaean Oracles, that is the classics in the field of mysticism and magic.

And this was not mere name-dropping:

A glance at the introductions [to modern editions] of any of the four works mentioned will reveal that Psellos was one of its few readers in the Greek-speaking middle ages or even an important source for the text itself.<sup>29</sup>

But wider influence was exercised by the *De daemonibus*, the Latin translation (by Marsilio Ficino) of Psellos' Περὶ ἐνέργειας δαιμόνων διάλογος published in the Aldine incunabulum which is the first of the eighty early printings of his texts to which we have referred.<sup>30</sup> It is a broad and accessible summary of Greek writing on the subject. As with many of Psellos' works, its attribution is contested, but recent studies have tended to restore it to Psellian authorship, and the western writers who used it often quoted his name. The *De daemonibus* will serve here as an example to illustrate the importance of Psellos in the western Renaissance and early modern Europe, in the area of study where his influence lasted longest. This is the phase of his reception when readers were looking for practical help in comprehending their world.

There is a wide-ranging analysis by Darin Hayton<sup>31</sup> of western reception of the work. Hayton shows that this summary of ancient and Byzantine lore on demons and witches, in its Latin translation, was a staple of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European debate, and sparked publication of the Greek original and extensive discussions of its accuracy and that of the translation. Verbal echoes appear in many literary works, including Ronsard

in French, and in English writers as varied as Ben Jonson, Milton and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. More general influence is still more widespread. Psellos thus (largely via Ficino) provided much of the vocabulary and conceptual framework for discussions of demons and witchcraft for both the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. This is an extreme example of the dynamic reception of Psellos' work, but other facets of his authorship could bring interesting, though less extensive results.

## The future of Psellos studies

This chapter has pictured the development of Psellos studies in ways that include some obvious lines of development for the future. The evidence that Psellos provides for every side of the mind-set of the eleventh century will continue to be explored. The many variations of focus and even fact between his different works, written with different conventions, techniques and purposes at different times in his life will continue to be studied.<sup>32</sup> The subtlety of the variations will be scrutinized and his multi-faceted authorial personality established with ever-increasing precision – or ever-increasing appreciation of its flexibility. Research will range over every subject that appears in his texts and all the centuries of late Byzantium and the Renaissance to show his influence in both synchronic and diachronic ways.

But these studies at present have a seriously inadequate centre. It is not uncommon in medieval studies for important cultural figures to lack a biography. But the difference with Psellos is that there survive thousands of pieces of tantalizing biographical detail which obstinately refuse to cohere in any useful way. Psellos in a sense has many conflicting shadowy biographies. If one restricts examination to religious issues, he has been interpreted by the same scholar as a crypto-pagan writing to undermine the Christian assumptions of Byzantine society and as the major source of lectures for the training of learned Byzantine priests.<sup>33</sup> Reconciliation of the

two roles is not impossible, but troubling. Psellos has been portrayed as a devoted opponent of monasticism, yet his mother, his father, his wife (probably) and his closest friend and teacher all entered monastic institutions. He himself spent almost a year in a monastery on Mt Olympos, choosing it voluntarily as a place of asylum in political uncertainty: his persecution by the Church largely followed his exit from Olympos. He later was careful to regulate his conduct as a monk in the world. He ensured much more contact with monasteries throughout his life by investing most of his money in them by the *charistike* system. On a broader level, he made himself the central character of the *Chronographia*, giving the impression that he was constantly at the elbow of each ruling emperor between his first arrival in the palace and his death. But others of his own texts often show him far from the seat of power. The reasons that led him to write like this about himself are far from clear. Were they, for example, psychological, political or literary? Was he satisfying his ego, defending his record, or giving his readers a first-hand, close-up view of events? Or perhaps all three?

The problem with Psellos' biography is not its absence but its prominent, fragmented and disorienting presence. The authorial personality at the centre of his work is, as we have seen, frequently and consciously varied in a very modern way. But the specific historical context within which each piece of literary experimentation takes place may often only be worked out – if at all – by subtle and indirect arguments based on several different texts. The reader seeking to interpret many of his statements and the events of his life is forced to negotiate between an uncomfortably large number of different assumptions about sequence of events, motivations and dates. Some of the problems are soluble. The much-discussed issue of the date of his death, for example, was worked out long ago by Eva de Vries-Van der Velden.<sup>34</sup> But the arguments needed are surprisingly complex, and it is tempting to adopt easier but less satisfactory methods.

It is probably too soon to write a convincing overall biography of Psellos, but that is the ultimate desideratum. In the meantime, there are many partial tasks to be completed. Several of these have been started and taken a long

way by Eva de Vries-Van der Velden, but in some of her studies careful preliminary work, mainly based on Psellos' letters, is pushed a little too far in her conclusions: this has sometimes led to unjustified neglect of her work as a whole. Very soon, as we have seen, all the main biographical texts will have modern editions: this will be particularly useful in the case of the letters and the funeral encomia on the patriarchs. The new evidence must be written into modern historical narrative, with particular concentration on the identification of problems that can be solved and the appropriate methodologies to be used.<sup>35</sup> For example, a large proportion of the letters are sent to thematic *kritai*. When during Psellos' career were they sent? What was their motivation? They are dominated by the structure of friendship, epistolary *philia*. Is this a literally accurate and sufficient explanation of the reasons for these letters, or is it a kind of metaphor for an enterprise that we would name differently if we knew all its parameters?

There is a great deal of complex evidence to be surveyed in answering questions like these. We should not be afraid to use lengthy arguments to bring out its potential. But it will often be necessary, at least in the short term, to admit defeat in the search for convincing solutions. My own mental map of the biography of Psellos, for example, contains a number of areas where statements from his more rhetorical works, like the *Chronographia* and the *Encomium on his Mother*, stand in stark contrast to conclusions drawn (often indirectly) from pieces that show more predictable rhetorical colouring, like the letters and the encomia on the patriarchs. Biographies will need to leave some such issues temporarily unresolved – perhaps by using typographical means: narrative based on rhetoric that seems to need decoding might, for example, be printed in italics. I expect that research across the whole range of Psellos' work, analysing his breadth of knowledge and depth of skill in all the genres he uses, will gradually redefine these knotty problems and allow us to work out the details of his life and his complex mind-set. We will thus be able to evaluate better the masses of information he provides on eleventh-century Byzantium and to appreciate the high overall place he should hold in the whole intellectual world of his time.

# Notes

- 1 This chapter derives from a paper prepared as an introduction to the conference, a warning of the dominance of Michael Psellos over the sources for the eleventh century. It will first state its thesis without much in the way of annotation, despite the broad sweep of its subject. It will then concentrate on details demonstrating, exemplifying, qualifying and extending some of the points made, with more conventional footnotes.
- 2 P. Moore, *Iter Psellianum* (Toronto, 2005), lists the works and the manuscripts. His list of manuscripts cited numbers 1790 items.
- 3 See <http://proteus.brown.edu/psellos/8129> (accessed 30 May 2014).
- 4 E. Miller, *Journal des Savants*, année 1874, 269–84; année 1875, 13–29; année 1876, 249–53, 261–71.
- 5 *Ioannis Zonarae Monachi, qui olim Byzantij Magnus Drungarius excubiaru[m] seu Biglae, & protosecretarius fuit, Compendium historiarum, in tres tomos distinctum: quorum primus agit de rebus Iudaicis, ab exordio mundi usq[ue] ad Hierosolymitanum excidium. Secundus, historiam Romanam, ab urbe condita usq[ue] ad Constantinum Magnum, breuiter complectitur. Tertius, imperatorum res gestas, à Constantino Magno usq[ue] ad obitum Alexij Comneni, tractat. Opus praeclarum, ac diu desideratum: nunc verò demum liberalitate magnifici & generosi viri Antonii Fuggeri, &c. & labore Hieronimi VVolfii, Graecè et Latinè, ... in lucem editum* (Basel, 1557).
- 6 *Georgii Cedreni Annales, siue, Historiæ ab exordio mundi ad Isacium Comnenum usque compendium: nunc primum Gr. & Lat. editi: G. Xylandro interprete, qui annotationes etiam addidit* (Basel, 1566).
- 7 W. Brunet de Presle and I. Bekker (eds), *Michael Attaleiates* (Bonn, 1853).
- 8 J. Duffy, ‘Dealing with the Psellos Corpus: From Allatius to Westerink and the Bibliotheca Teubnerina’, in C. Barber and D. Jenkins (eds), *Reading Michael Psellos* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 1–12.
- 9 I. Polemis (ed.), *Michael Psellus: Orationes funebres*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 2014). D.R. Reinsch (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia* (Berlin, 2014).
- 10 The basic prospectus was set out in E.N. Papaioannou, ‘Das Briefcorpus des Michael Psellos: Vorarbeiten zu einer kritischen Neuedition’, *JÖB* 48 (1998), 67–117. The latest developments are in S. Papaioannou, ‘A Fragile Literature: Byzantine Letter-Collections and the Case of Michael

Psellos', in P. Odorico (ed.), *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: Le texte en tant que message immédiat*, Dossiers Byzantins 11 (Paris, 2012), 289–328.

[11](#) J.-C. Riedinger, 'Remarques sur le texte de la Chronographie de Michael Psellos (1)', *REB* 63 (2005), 97–126, esp. 98–9; D.R. Reinsch, 'Warum eine neue Edition der Chronographia des Michael Psellos?', in K. Belke et al. (eds), *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift für Johannes Koder* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 2007), 525–46.

[12](#) E. Miller, *Journal des Savants*, année 1875, 24.

[13](#) The most thorough review of the first (Paris) edition is by I. Pandazidis in the periodical *ΑΘήναιον* 3 (1874), 668–86; 7 (1878), 322–46; and 8 (1879), 44–67, 247–57. The equivalent for the second (London) edition is by E. Kurtz in *BZ* 9 (1900), 492–515.

[14](#) C. Sathas (ed. with crit. notes), *The History of Psellus*, London 1899.

[15](#) É. Renauld (ed.), *Michel Psellos, Chronographie; ou, Histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976–1077)* (Paris, 1926), LXII.

[16](#) J.B. Bury, 'Roman Emperors from Basil II to Isaac Komnenos', *English Historical Review* 13 (1889), 42.

[17](#) E.R.A. Sewter (ed. and trans.), *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellos* (London, 1953).

[18](#) *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 18 (1967), 131.

[19](#) *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos: Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie* (Wiesbaden, 2005).

[20](#) References are by chapter and section to S. Impellizzeri (ed.), *Michele Psello, Imperatori di Bisanzio*, 2 vols (Milan, 1984).

[21](#) D. Jenkins (tr. with introduction), 'The Court memorandum (hypomnēma) regarding the engagement of his daughter', in A. Kaldellis (ed. and trans.), *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos* (Notre Dame, 2006), 139–46.

[22](#) S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2013) (henceforward 'Papaioannou, *Psello*'), 192–231.

[23](#) Papaioannou, *Psello*, 231.

- 24 See L.G. Westerink (ed.), Michael Psellus, *Poemata* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1992), XXI–XXII, especially the titles. Psellos is plainly responding, at least in part, to satirical comment on his need for women.
- 25 The classic analysis is M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Birmingham, 1997), 163–222.
- 26 S. Papaioannou, ‘Michael Psellos on Friendship and Love: Erotic Discourse in Eleventh-Century Constantinople’, *Early Medieval Europe* 19 (2011), 43–61.
- 27 Papaioannou, *Psellos*, 238.
- 28 See, e.g., P. Magdalino, ‘Occult Science and Imperial Power in Byzantine History and Historiography (9th–12th Centuries)’ in P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (eds) *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium* (Geneva, 2006), 119–61.
- 29 J. Duffy, ‘Reactions of Two Byzantine Intellectuals to the Theory and Practice of Magic: Michael Psellos and Michael Italikos’, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic* (Washington, DC, 1995), 83–4.
- 30 *Index eorum, quae hoc in libro habentur. Iamblichus de mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, Assyriorum. Proclus In Platonicum Alcibiadem de anima atq[ue] daemonie. Proclus De sacrificio & magia. Porphyrius De diuinis atq[ue] daemonibus. Synesius Platonicus De somniis. Psellus De daemonibus. Expositio Prisciani & Marsili in Theophrastu[m] De sensu, phantasia & intellectu. Alcinoi Platonici philosophi Liber de doctri[n]a Platonis. Speusippi Platonis discipuli Liber de Platonis difinitionibus [sic]. Pythagorae philosophi Aurea uerba. Symbola Pithagorae philosophi. Xenocratis philosophi platonici Liber de morte. Marsili Ficini Liber de uoluptate* (Venice, 1497).
- 31 D. Hayton, ‘Michael Psellos’ *De Daemonibus* in the Renaissance’, in C. Barber and D. Jenkins (eds), *Reading Michael Psellos* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 193–215.
- 32 M. Jeffreys, ‘Psellos and ‘His Emperors’: Fact, Fiction and Genre’ in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010), 73–91.
- 33 A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos’ Chronographia* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1999); ‘The Date of Psellos’ Theological Lectures and Higher Religious Education in Constantinople’, *BSL* 63 (2005), 143–51.
- 34 E. de Vries-Van der Velden, ‘Psellos et son gendre’, *BF* 23 (1996), 109–49, esp. 145–6. See also M. Jeffreys, ‘Psellos in 1078’, *BZ* 107 (2014), 77–96.

35 My own plan is to prepare English summaries of all Psellos' letters, to be published in M. Jeffreys and M.D. Lauxtermann (eds), *The Letters of Michael Psellos: Cultural Networks and Historical Realities*. This may prove an addition to the genre of Psellian 'vulgarisation pur et simple'.

## 3

# Authorial Practices and Competitive Performance in the Works of Michael Psellos

*Floris Bernard*

We are accustomed to represent Byzantine literary history as a closed chronological list of authors and works. Only those texts that have survived the vicissitudes of textual preservation influence our ideas of Byzantine literature, although we know that these vicissitudes can be capricious. Moreover, we think of literature as the domain of a small group of people, as if only a tiny elite of mandarins was occupied with literary creation. This mental representation, if I may so describe it, comes to the surface in some frequently repeated assumptions. For example, we are often inclined to attribute an anonymous text to an author who already belongs to our neatly established gallery of authors. Moreover, we view the production of ‘works’ as an artistic achievement, as if each work was written within a self-conscious literary tradition.

In this contribution, I shall focus instead on the production of texts as a social act. I have therefore chosen the term ‘authorial practices’ as the framework for this study. This concept makes it possible to include all forms by which people engaged in the composition or improvisation of texts or speeches, without necessarily implying that these authors intended to play a

part in literary history. It can involve extant texts, but can also include all those absent texts that form the backdrop to the texts we know, a foil against which we might reconsider them.

The questions I will ask here are therefore pragmatic and inspired by an interest in literary sociology. What social contexts gave rise to the production of texts? What role did textual production play in the career of a typical intellectual in Psellos' time? I will chiefly concentrate on authorial practices connected with education and the transition from education to career. When discussing these questions, I hope to bring out the importance of competition as a regulatory factor, and to clarify the ideological discourses that accompanied the descriptions of authorial practices. Finally, I wish to close on a note of caution regarding the application of the concept of *theatron* to the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the evidence for authorial practices is indirect. For this case study, the evidence is taken from the works of Michael Psellos. In his writings, Psellos gives many accounts of the role of authorial practices, be they those of his friends, his pupils, his patrons, or, indeed, his own. I will not focus here on Psellos' ideas concerning the abstract notion of 'authorship', as this has already been done admirably by Stratis Papaioannou in his book on rhetoric and authorship in Michael Psellos.<sup>2</sup> Instead, I wish to consider authorship in its concrete manifestations, firmly embedded in social contexts and occasions.

The specific social and cultural conditions of Psellos' time played a major role in the appreciation and function of authorial practices.<sup>3</sup> Seen broadly, the mid-eleventh century was a period full of opportunities for intellectuals like Psellos. Emperors embarked on a policy of including ever more people in the lucrative bureaucratic system, and the civil class, growing in wealth and influence, was eager to profit from this situation. In response to this, Psellos advocated a so-called meritocratic ideology.<sup>4</sup> Success and wealth, according to this discourse, should be distributed on the basis of intellectual merit, not military valour or aristocratic birth. People were defined and hierarchized with *hoi logoi* as measure. This term encompassed everything related to education and culture. In the world of Psellos and his friends, *hoi*

*logoi* grew into an ideal, something to be venerated and eagerly pursued. At various levels, authorial practices played a role in assessing individuals according to the hierarchy of *hoi logoi*.

## Authorial practices at school

Education was a cornerstone in this process. It was at school, of course, that Byzantines learned how to write texts. The first place to look when investigating authorial practices must therefore be the education system, and especially the training in rhetoric. Michael Psellos' career, moreover, was based upon his reputation as a teacher, and a considerable portion of his extant writings are related to teaching. One particularly interesting category are those addressed to his pupils, in which he admonishes them or focuses on the ties of friendship he had formed with them or their families. The personal and social aspects of education play a great role in these texts.

The funeral orations he wrote for pupils or former fellow students address in detail the circumstances of education. In all these orations, Psellos emphasizes the educational excellence of the deceased persons. They are put forward as examples of intellectual merit, both exceptionally gifted and eager to devote time and effort to their education. One of these funeral orations is addressed to a former fellow student of Psellos, an anonymous *patrikios*. Psellos describes the successive steps of the *patrikios* in his school curriculum. From the beginning of the oration, the *patrikios* is represented as a diligent pupil, eager to ‘toil in *hoi logoi*'.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, it was expected that this would bring profit to him: there were ‘expectations of his efforts’, as Psellos puts it.<sup>6</sup> When describing the *patrikios*' qualities in more detail, Psellos makes a clear connection between intellectual merit and social success: ‘He excelled so much in talent and study that he seemed the best of all pupils of the school, suited to be selected for a higher destiny and secure a post in the imperial chancellery as a prize for the competition’.<sup>7</sup> This is a clear example of the meritocratic model that Psellos proposes. Intelligence

and abilities demonstrated in the course of an individual's curriculum are decisive for future careers in the imperial bureaucracy. This selection is based on merit and diligent effort. The use of the word *agon* ('contest') here may point to this toilsome process by way of a metaphor, but it may also imply that contests were an important element of this process. Psellos then describes how the deceased *patrikios* applied himself with eagerness to the study of rhetoric. He adds the following:

Not only did he have a fair understanding [of rhetoric], but he himself was already creating works, and one can now see many different products of the art [of rhetoric] composed by him. Some of these writings are competitive and intended to contest with rivals in the discipline; some belong to the genre of panegyric; and others are put forward simply for practice or as an exercise. I have read these texts myself and admired them.<sup>8</sup>

Psellos distinguishes here clearly between the study of texts and the production of texts; the latter is evidently seen as more advanced than the former. It is, moreover, clear that written texts are intended here, since Psellos specifies that one can still see the texts created by the *patrikios*. These texts were written as part of the school curriculum. And, as an exception to the rule, we have here fairly detailed information on the content of the works produced in a school context, for Psellos distinguishes three different kinds of texts. The first of these is termed 'agonistic': our anonymous *patrikios* apparently wrote texts to compete with his fellow students. The second type of text is 'panegyric', and the final type of writing is limited to school exercises: to gain fluency in writing, the *patrikios* composed preparatory studies. It is precisely these three kinds of text (panegyric, 'preparatory', and above all, 'agonistic') that we will discuss further on. Psellos points out that he was the first and privileged audience of his friend's works: he read and commented upon his texts and corrected them. The same applies to the letters that the *patrikios* sent to his teacher: these are tellingly described as 'tokens' (l.169: γνωρίσματα) of his rhetorical inspiration. At this stage, texts are not read in their own right: rather, they are demonstrations of the skills of the 'author'.

The funeral oration for the *patrikios* John,<sup>9</sup> a pupil of Psellos, follows the same pattern. Psellos especially highlights the eloquence of his pupil. When

he describes the opportunities that John missed through being snatched away by death, Psellos mentions the texts this pupil had composed. They bear comparison with the writings of ancient Hellenes, Psellos asserts. Interestingly, he adds that John's best friend, a certain Nicholas, could now only communicate with his deceased friend through the texts John had left behind. Here we gain a sense of a group that would be willing not only to hear and receive texts, but also to preserve them, as a memorial for the deceased member of their circle.

The funeral oration of Romanos *referendarios* describes a similar career path.<sup>10</sup> It is a conventional oration, describing Romanos' intelligence, fine character and short career, interspersing this with outpourings of mourning and grief. Psellos, as his teacher, gives personal testimony to Romanos' training in letters. He praises particularly Romanos' ability to pronounce speeches extempore. He adds:

By giving birth to one creation after another he grew more confident as he progressed; and if he noticed that many people were paying attention to him, he laboured all the more, and with his tongue he adorned his creation yet further, to avoid seeing me suddenly pop up.<sup>11</sup>

The production of texts is here firmly embedded in a kind of public performance. People watched and heard a student presenting a showcase of his own eloquence. As it is said that Romanos with his tongue adorned his creation, this passage probably refers to an oral performance with a prepared text at hand. Psellos also emphasizes his own role in Romanos' development as an author and intellectual: the pupil blushed when delivering his speeches, because he was conscious that in reality they were the offspring of his teacher. These assertions betray Psellos' tendency to highlight his own achievements; nevertheless, I do not doubt that they also reflect a common process. Authors learned the *métier* by imitating the examples set by their teacher. This is corroborated by statements of Psellos at the beginning or end of some of his speeches, where he clarifies that they are intended as material to be imitated.<sup>12</sup>

In the fragment quoted above, Psellos uses the metaphor of delivering a baby to refer to the creation of a text. It is an ubiquitous image. Antony

Littlewood has called it the ‘obstetric metaphor’.<sup>13</sup> In this imagery, of Platonic origin, Psellos is the midwife who elicits textual creations from his pupils. He performs ‘midwifery of words’, and the texts from his pupils are called ‘offspring in words’. Moreover, it was a common idea in Byzantium that a teacher was in a certain sense a father, or an uncle, to his pupils. The writings are the creations of the pupils, but derive their inspiration from the teacher.

This cluster of images is markedly present at the end of the encomium for John Italos, one of Psellos’ pupils.<sup>14</sup> Psellos attaches to this text an epilogue, where he addresses his pupils as a group. He affirms that he embraces all the texts they create. True enough, as a midwife, he needs to clean the new-born babies, to transform them, but, even if they may be deformed beasts, he loves them. Many of these testimonies, we can conclude, show us a kind of collective authorship: pupils produce texts under the guidance of their teacher, who corrects and improves them.

## Texts as tests

The above examples show that texts produced within the school precincts were no inconsequential exercises. They were public showcases, or, if written down, portfolios that could propel a student into a career. Schools were the places of selection and allocation, determining the candidates for official functions, which, as we indicated above, provided opportunities for an extended class of people. Excellence in education, as demonstrated through the production of texts, gave rise to very concrete expectations. Texts were effectively tests.

In the funeral oration for John Xiphilinos, Psellos emphasizes the importance of textual production as a selective criterion in a social system based on merit. The following passage, about the early careers of Psellos and Xiphilinos, hails the policies of the emperor Constantine Monomachos (1042–51):

In this manner the emperor did not apply an illogical custom, but a rational judgment in his choice of men for the palace. Hence I preceded today's laudandus: I was the first to approach the propylaea, not without effort, not without tests and judgments. On the contrary: I was tested and scrutinized about all kinds of discourses, with many judgments, and on the basis of improvised writings. In this way I was pushed towards the entrance.<sup>15</sup>

The composition of texts forms an indispensable element in the meritocratic system such as Psellos represents it here. He was tested on the writings that he himself composed, and also on texts he had to improvise on the spot. We may reconstruct this, I think, as a series of scrutinizing public performances, somewhere between an exam and an entrance ritual.<sup>16</sup> Psellos is at pains to emphasize that these selection procedures are rational and fair. Both effort and talent are needed to make progress. The rewards are clear enough: Psellos is 'pushed towards the entrance', probably indicating that he was admitted to the lower ranks of the palace bureaucracy.

In his *Chronographia*, Psellos also claims that his success at court was due to his remarkable eloquence.<sup>17</sup> Here, references to concrete occasions are absent, but it is clear enough that Psellos earned a reputation by showing off his rhetorical talent. More evidence for such public performances can be found in Psellos' *basilikoi logoi*. His early panegyrics for Constantine Monomachos in particular refer to their own context as one of public display and competition. As can be inferred from several internal elements, these texts were written at a moment when Psellos was still a young and upcoming ambitious *logios*. Even if the prime addressee naturally remains the emperor, Psellos implicitly or explicitly addresses a wider public of people who were to judge his demonstration. At the end of the second *basilikos logos*, Psellos introduces the element of merit and reward:

Let our writings be judged by many ears, and whoever is singled out, to him should be opened the treasuries of the palace. You have, oh emperor, judges of words. You have many of them, Muses indeed. They should assess my writings, and let the others then divide the lamb as is fitting.<sup>18</sup>

Psellos hints here clearly at possible rewards. He expects nothing less than imperial wealth flowing in his direction. Psellos himself states the conditions: his writings should show that he is fit for the job; they must be put to the test. There is even a group of specialists, it appears, who assess the

demonstrations or writings of the candidates. The self-confidence Psellos displays here is striking. This self-confidence and self-assertiveness have often been remarked upon in eleventh-century writers. This may come across as more understandable if we consider these features against the backdrop of fierce rivalry between candidates eager to distinguish themselves from their peers.

In another *basilikos logos*,<sup>19</sup> Psellos plays an intricate game with the status of his text as part of a ‘contest’, an *agon*. The orator claims that he is faced with the difficult struggle to do justice with mere words to the overpowering excellence of the emperor. This *agon* is closely observed by a jury of judges. At the beginning of the oration, where he conjures up the image of the *agon*, Psellos remarks: ‘At both sides stand the assemblies of the wise, so that they can judge and test my demonstration from every angle.’<sup>20</sup> And at the end of his oration, when Psellos has presumably proven his worth, he again addresses these judges:

And you, who are standing at both sides of the *stadion*, who are the examiners and judges of my words, what do you say? Do you think I have contributed to the battle something that is worth mentioning?<sup>21</sup>

Psellos does not intend here to describe a realistic situation: the judges are part of a fictitious battle in a rhetorical metaphor. Yet these words may hint at the actual context of Psellos’ speech, a showcase watched by a public of judges, and the two (fictitious battle and actual battle) are here made to blend into one. The judges are called here wise men, presumably because they themselves were selected from among the highest echelons of the *logioi*. Psellos terms his own demonstration an *epideixis*, a word that is otherwise not always used in a positive sense. It implies a certain degree of theatricality: the candidate had to display his skills as much as possible. It is a parade in an arena. Psellos here calls this arena a *stadion*. It forms part of the sporting metaphor that Psellos often evokes in the context of rhetorical demonstrations. This is a point to which we will return.

Psellos not only presented himself as a candidate. He also introduced his own pupils as such. In a *basilikos logos* for Constantine Monomachos,

presumably at a more advanced stage of his career, Psellos presents his students, and recommends them to the emperor.<sup>22</sup> As George Dennis noted, imperial panegyrics were used to further collective and individual interests, and they were showcases for the orators to parade their skills.<sup>23</sup> Speeches before the emperor served as an excellent introduction to the world of the court: they were a rhetorical and social *rite de passage*. There is a possible connection with Epiphany celebrations when it was customary for pupils to deliver orations in the presence of the emperor.<sup>24</sup> I have not detected any definite references to the feast of the Epiphany in eleventh-century texts (references are more numerous from the twelfth century), but it can be assumed that the tradition continued.

It is reasonable to assume that the *basilikoi logoi* of Psellos reflect this custom of public performances by young candidates eager to advertise themselves and show off their skills through speeches which they themselves had composed or improvised. The frequent references to rivals and competition make clear that this was a competitive game, an *agon*, a game that ultimately decided careers.<sup>25</sup> So-called judges or arbiters were called upon to assess the performance and to decide over the merits of teachers and students. It is not clear whether these judges were peers, or perhaps a kind of neutral panel, or whether their task corresponds to an official function. In any event, John Mauropous, Psellos' teacher, and himself one of the leading authors and intellectuals of the time, may have been such a 'judge'. When describing his activities as a teacher, he states that he 'judged the contests between teachers and between pupils'.<sup>26</sup> He makes a similar statement in a letter.<sup>27</sup> Evidently, these judges held an important and influential position in the transition from education to the 'real world'.

## The contests in *hoi logoi*

Let us return to the anonymous *patrikios* who was the subject of the funeral oration discussed in the beginning of this study. One of the three genres he

practised was called ‘panegyric’: this obviously refers to the kind of text we have just discussed. Another kind of text was called ‘agonistic’. This suggests that competitive texts were consciously defined as such. It is telling that Michael Attaleiates, at the outset of his history, asserts that his work is *not* ‘agonistic’.<sup>28</sup> Competition was evidently an important stimulus for authorial practices.

From the very beginning of rhetorical training, competition and polemic were ingrained in the process of writing texts. A curious text that Psellos addressed to two pupils is illuminating in this regard. The text carries the title: ‘To two students of his who direct writings against each other’.<sup>29</sup> It appears that these two students had indulged in writing polemical writings against each other. For Psellos, this is a waste of effort: the signal for a real war has not yet been given, and their attacks do not concern the real enemy but each other. They disturb the good order of the *logikè phalanx*, the army of which Psellos is the general. Hence, it is not the polemical character of the writings *per se* that is criticized by Psellos; rather, it is the fact that their timing and target are ill-judged. This suggests that, besides these playful contests between pupils, there were other contests with a more important issue – Psellos specifically mentions ‘obtaining careers’.<sup>30</sup> In these serious battles, pupils are expected to fight in order like a phalanx, with Psellos as a general. It is very likely that Psellos refers here to inter-school contests, in which pupils took up ‘battle’ against other schools, with their teacher as leader.<sup>31</sup>

Besides, says Psellos, their literary works are not yet well-formed, and lack the necessary technique. They compose texts at a quick pace, Psellos admits, but the haste shows. Psellos again makes use of the beloved metaphor of childbirth: the babies that his pupils give birth to and that he, as a midwife, has helped them to deliver, are deformed and misshapen. Psellos is compelled to correct them, and he urges them to compose texts with more premeditation and structure. As this text shows, polemical writing emerged very spontaneously in the environment of educated, ambitious students.

The ‘contests in *hoi logoi*’ (*logikoi agones* or *agones tou logou*) appear as a well-circumscribed phenomenon that was a hotbed for authorial practices.

The term occurs frequently in texts of Psellos, especially those describing young students working their way up. These contests appear with varying levels of playfulness and seriousness; and it is not always clear whether a precise social occasion is intended, defined in time and space and perhaps ritualized to a certain degree, or rather a general background of testing and polemics. But in any case, within the framework of these contests of *hoi logoi*, Psellos almost always seems to have in mind the demonstration of rhetorical skills in a performative setting. Texts were then not only tests; they were also contests. For Psellos, their significance was clear: as he asserts in various writings directed against his slanderers, the contests that were held in an educational setting were no mere games (as his enemies apparently thought): division of wealth and official functions depended on them.<sup>32</sup>

In Psellos' funeral oration for Constantine Leichoudes, he tells us how the deceased, when still as a student, successfully participated in the 'great contest' and in the 'battle over words'.<sup>33</sup> Leichoudes was very able in these contests, because he could handle all kinds of texts, both improvised speeches and speeches composed with preparation and premeditation. His entire educational career is described in terms of contests, competition and rivalry. Athletic imagery is again predominant in this account.

Psellos' funeral oration for Xiphilinos also teems with references to competitions in *hoi logoi*. These follow immediately on a description of Xiphilinos' rhetorical style (§9). At a point when Xiphilinos must have begun his career, Psellos mentions 'altercations'. Both friends suffered heavily from attacks 'from the other side'. But, standing in the middle of the *logikon theatron*, they successfully made their stand, and Xiphilinos' eloquence was victorious. Psellos applauded his friend, and Xiphilinos in turn supported Psellos at every 'contest and demonstration' (l. 36: ἐν ἀγῶσι καὶ ἐπιδείξεσιν). It is probable that this is again a reference to competitive rhetorical performances.<sup>34</sup> The word *epideixis* refers to the aspect of display: a term that has an ambiguous value for many Byzantine authors.<sup>35</sup> The term *theatron*, I would contend, is equivalent to the *stadion* that we encountered

earlier: a metaphor for the contests and examinations that were going on, imagining them in the world of ancient sport or theatre festivals.

Immediately following on from this passage, Psellos paints us a picture of the state of education at this moment.<sup>36</sup> This picture must be seen as part of a narrative in which Psellos highlights the decay of education and culture before he came to prominence. None of the teachers proved to be superior to the others. The best pupils flocked to him, and as a result he reigned supreme in the contests. In spite of the self-interested viewpoint with which Psellos represents things here, it is clear that the ‘contests in *hoi logoi*’ (l. 12: οἱ τῶν λόγων ἀγῶνες) are the defining framework to establish a hierarchy of teachers. He likens these contests to ‘public *theatra*’, presided over by an ‘arbiter’. The contests are described in a vocabulary that reminds the reader of the ancient theatre festivals. Pupils (‘choirs’) gathered around the figure of a teacher (‘choir leaders’), and together they were pitted against other schools. This way, the teachers were ‘mutually examined’. These inter-school contests thus formed an important test for teachers and pupils alike.

Many poems of the period refer to these inter-school contests.<sup>37</sup> In most cases, the *schedos* exercise is the subject of these contests. Christopher Mitylenaios, for example, praises a certain teacher for training his pupils for the contests of words (l. 7: ἀγῶνας τῶν λόγων) against other schools.<sup>38</sup> From these poems, it is clear that pupils were called forward to give public demonstrations of their abilities, thereby enhancing or damaging the reputation of their teacher. The sometimes aggressive tone of these poems testifies to the fierce rivalry between schools and teachers.

## Theatron

The concept of *theatron* has gained much currency in Byzantine studies as the standard term for gatherings of learned people and a place for collective performance, especially in later centuries.<sup>39</sup> How should we interpret the term in Psellos’ texts?

To start with, the overwhelming majority of occurrences of the word *theatron* in Psellos' works refer to the hippodrome, whether as a historical building or as the hippodrome of Constantinople. As to the few instances where it does occur in a context of literary performance, it is questionable whether Psellos thought of this word as primarily describing that institution for which we now use the word *theatron*. One of the most revealing passages is to be found in a letter to an anonymous friend:

Let us approach each other as in a panhellenic theatre, by showing your letters, and let us read them and strive to achieve something equal. And he who can show the most elegant letter, he wins, and carries off friendship as a prize; the others, grumbling, will have to follow.<sup>40</sup>

With the word *theatron*, Psellos evokes here the setting of the ancient theatrical festivals, which, as also the Byzantines knew, involved a competitive aspect. But this is nothing more than a comparison; the word ὥσπερ testifies to this. Significantly, even here, among friends, the word carries the sense of a competition, even if manifestly playful. In a letter to Mauropous, the word is used in a comparable manner: here, the Panathenaic games form the background for Psellos' imagery.<sup>41</sup>

In a letter to Xiphilinos, the word *theatron* (again in a playful metaphor) refers to the publicity of Psellos' texts: he has not yet shown them publicly.<sup>42</sup>

A similar connotation of the word is present in a letter addressed to Constantine, nephew of Kerouarios.<sup>43</sup> Psellos boasts that when he stands in the middle of a great theatre, he pays attention to his style. *Theatron* is here connected to *theatrizein*: making a show, or making a parade of one's rhetorical skills.

A curious instance of *logikon theatron* is found in a work written on behalf of the emperor and addressed to the Sultan Malik-shah.<sup>44</sup> Psellos relates how the Sultan provided time for a discussion organized between Byzantine and Muslim ambassadors, concerning differences between their religions. The occasion for this learned dispute among scholars is termed a *logikon theatron*. Two essential elements converge here: a sense of competition, and a public character. In a letter to Eustratios Choirosphaktes,<sup>45</sup> Psellos refers repeatedly to amiable and intelligent talk in

learned circles. For this, he uses twice the word σύλλογος, once the word σύνοδος, and once θέατρον.<sup>46</sup>

The status of the word *theatron* is not only ambiguous in Psellos' texts. In his study of intellectual circles in late Byzantium, Niels Gaul helpfully distinguishes between different significations of the word.<sup>47</sup> Apart from the meaning of a gathering of intellectuals at a defined time and a defined place, the word *theatron* can have metaphorical, mimetic or metonymic significations. The first category of meaning seems to me predominant in eleventh-century texts.<sup>48</sup> The word forms each time part of a metaphor conjuring up the sports games at the Hippodrome or the ancient Greek festivals. The word *stadion*, although less often used, has a very similar status. And of course, the word *agon* also forms part of the same metaphor, but, as I would contend, the collocation *logikos agon* is used with more frequency and precision than (*logikon*) *theatron*.

These terms denote an imaginary place where intellectuals compete with each other. By no means can we reconstruct a physical place in the palace or in an aristocratic house, nor even in the schools, that would have been called 'theatron' by contemporary Byzantines. And significantly, in nearly all of these examples, competition prevails over friendly admiration.

## Conclusion

The texts discussed here suggest that authorial practices are closely related to education and the ensuing scramble for careers in the bureaucratic system of the capital. Especially in the eleventh century, when occasions for social promotion were plentiful but the basis of social success insecure, texts were part of the continuing *agon* to prove oneself as a true *logios*. Entering into the arena (to continue the Byzantine metaphor) by producing self-composed texts or speeches was a necessary part of gaining credibility in intellectual circles. A discourse on meritocratic ideals provided a rationale for this selection procedure. This background had a considerable impact on literature

in general. It explains to a great extent the assertiveness and self-centredness of authors, as well as their desire to display knowledge and skills, features that we find so often in eleventh-century texts.

## Notes

- [1](#) A more concise treatment of this question is to be found in F. Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry, 1025–1081* (Oxford, 2014), 253–9.
- [2](#) S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge and New York, 2013).
- [3](#) I limit myself to one of the most important studies on this topic: H. Ahrweiler, ‘Recherches sur la société byzantine au XIe siècle: nouvelles hiérarchies et nouvelles solidarités’, *TM* 6 (1976), 99–124.
- [4](#) J. Haldon, ‘Social Élites, Wealth and Power’, in: J. Haldon (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium* (Chichester and Malden, MA, 2009), 168–211, here at 179.
- [5](#) P. Gautier (ed.), ‘Monodies inédites de Michel Psellos’, *REB* 36 (1978), 82–151, 5.10: τὸν περὶ λόγους οὐκ ὀλίγα μοχθήσαντα. I cite following number of oration and line number.
- [6](#) Gautier (ed.), ‘Monodies’, 5.12–13: τὰς τῶν πόνων ἐλπίδας.
- [7](#) Gautier (ed.), ‘Monodies’, 5.146–9: Τοιοῦτος ἦν ἐκεῖνος καὶ τὴν εὐφυίαν καὶ τὴν σπουδὴν ὥστε καὶ ἄριστος ἀπάντων ἐν τῷ παιδευτηρίῳ ἀναφῆναι καὶ κρείττονι ἐγκριθῆναι μοίρᾳ καὶ ἄθλον ἀγῶνος ἀποίσασθαι τὴν ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις γραφήν. For the specific usage of τὴν ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις γραφήν as an employment as a notary or secretary in the imperial chancellery, see Gautier *ad locum*.
- [8](#) Gautier (ed.), ‘Monodies’, 5.161–5: Καὶ οὐ κατανενοίκει μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἥδη καὶ εἰργάσατο, καὶ πολλὰ τοῦτοι ἔστι καὶ διάφορα τὰ ἐκ τῆς τέχνης γεννήματα, τὰ μὲν ἀγωνιστικὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄμιλλαν ἀντιτέχνων, τὰ δὲ τοῦ πανηγυρικοῦ ἐχόμενα εἴδους, τὰ δὲ ἄλλως ἐκτεθέντα ἀπλῶς πρὸς γυμνασίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπόπειραν, ἢ καὶ ἀνέγνων ἐγὼ καὶ τεθαύμακα.
- [9](#) Michael Psellos, *Scripta minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexel. 2 vols. (Milan, 1936–41), vol. I, 145–54.
- [10](#) Michael Psellos, *Orationes funebres*, ed. I. Polemis, vol. 1 (Berlin and Boston, 2014), no. 9.

[11](#) Psellos, *Or. fun.* 4 (ed. Polemis), §2.29–33: ἄλλα δ’ ἐπ’ ἄλλοις ἀποτίκτων γεννήμασι θαρραλεώτερος ἦν προϊών, καν ἥσθετο πολλῶν προσεχόντων αὐτῷ τὸν νοῦν, ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ τὰς ὡδῖνας ἐπήγειρε καὶ τῇ γλώττῃ πλέον τὸ τικτόμενον ἐπεμόρφωζεν, εἰ μήπου ἴδοι <με> ἀθρόως παραφανέντα.

[12](#) For instance, the funeral oration for the metropolitan of Melitene (Polemis no. 5), and the encomia on trivial subjects in Michael Psellos, *Oratoria minora*, ed. A. Littlewood (Leipzig, 1985), nos 27–30.

[13](#) A. Littlewood, ‘The Midwifery of Michael Psellos: An Example of Byzantine Literary Originality’, in M. Mullett and R. Scott (eds), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham, 1981), 136–42.

[14](#) Psellos, *Or. min.* 19.

[15](#) Psellos, *Or. fun.* 3 (ed. Polemis), §8.16–22: Διὸ ταῦτα οὐ συνήθειαν ἄλογον, ἀλλὰ κρίσιν εὔλογον τῶν περὶ τὰ βασιλεῖα ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπεποίητο. Ἐνταῦθα προλαμβάνω μὲν ἐγὼ τὸν νῦν εὐφημούμενον, καὶ πρῶτος προσπελάχω τοῖς προπυλαίοις, οὐκ ἀπονητί, οὐδὲ ἄνευ δοκιμασίας καὶ κρίσεως, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις ἔξετασθεὶς καὶ βασανισθεὶς ἐπὶ παντὶ λόγῳ, ἐπὶ πολλαῖς κρίσεσιν, ἐπ’ αὐτοσχεδίοις συγγράμμασιν, καὶ οὕτω συμπιεσθεὶς πρὸς τὴν εἰσοδον.

[16](#) J.-C. Riedinger, ‘Les quatre étapes de la vie de Michel Psellos’, *REB* 68 (2010), 5–60, esp. 31–3, contrasts this passage to the exams for notaries described in the *Book of the Prefect*. See also Ahrweiler, ‘Recherches’, 108, n. 32. For doubts on whether this passage refers to centrally organized exams, see G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos* (Munich, 1973), 21 and 108–9.

[17](#) Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. S. Impellizzeri; introd. D. Del Corno; comm. U. Criscuolo; trans. S. Ronchey, *Michele Psello: Imperatori di Bisanzio (Cronografia)*, 5th edn (Milan, 2005 [1984]), bk VI, chs 44–5.

[18](#) Michael Psellos, *Orationes panegyricae*, ed. G.T. Dennis (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 2.823–7: δοκιμαζέσθωσαν τὰ συγγράμματα ὑπὸ πολλαῖς ἀκοαῖς, καὶ ὅτῳ ἂν δοθῇ τὸ ἔξαίρετον ἐκείνῳ οἱ τῆς βασιλείας θησαυροὶ ἀνοιγέσθωσαν. ἔχεις, ὡς βασιλεὺς, κριτὰς λόγων πολλούς, μούσας αὐτόχρημα· οὗτοι κρινέτωσαν τὰ ἡμέτερα, οἱ δ’ ἄλλοι τὸν ἄρνα καθ’ ἀρμὸν διαιρείτωσαν. The concept of ‘dividing the lamb’ has Homeric and biblical overtones (see Ex. 12.4).

[19](#) Psellos, *Or. pan.* 4.

[20](#) Ibid., 4.21–3: ἐστᾶσι δὲ ἐκατέρωθεν γένη σοφῶν, ἵνα τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν ἐπίδειξιν πάντοθεν κρίνωσί τε καὶ βασανίσωσι.

[21](#) Ibid., 4.567–9: ὑμεῖς δὲ τί φατε οἱ παρ' ἐκάτερα τοῦ σταδίου, οἱ τῶν ἐμῶν λόγων δοκιμασταὶ καὶ κριταὶ; ἄρα γε δεδώκαμέν τι τῷ ἀγῶνι λόγου ἐπάξιον.

[22](#) Ibid., 6.261–92.

[23](#) G.T. Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality’, in: H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, DC, 1997), 131–40, esp. 132 and 136–7.

[24](#) Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric’, 136.

[25](#) Compare, for the twelfth century, P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 339.

[26](#) *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt*, ed. P. de Lagarde (Göttingen, 1882), poem 47, line 24.

[27](#) *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita*, ed. A. Karpozilos (Thessaloniki, 1990), letter 29, ll. 4–5.

[28](#) Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. I. Pérez-Martín (Madrid, 2002), 5–6.

[29](#) Psellos, *Or. min.* 20.

[30](#) Psellos, *Or. min.* 20.82: οὐ δεῖ ἀρχὰς τῶν ἀξιωμάτων ζητεῖν.

[31](#) P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 216 and 240.

[32](#) Psellos, *Or. min.* 9 (see especially ll. 34–63).

[33](#) Michael Psellos, *Or. fun.* 2 (ed. Polemis), §3.50–1: ἐπει δὲ καὶ ἀγῶν ὁ μέγιστος αὐτοὺς ἐξεδέχετο καὶ δρόμου καιρὸς ἦν καὶ τῆς περὶ τοὺς λόγους πάλης ...

[34](#) W. Wolska-Conus, ‘Les écoles de Psellos et de Xiphilin sous Constantin IX Monomaque’, *TM* 6 (1976), 223–43, here 224, suggests juridical battles.

[35](#) On *epideixis*, see also E. Bourbouhakis, ‘The End of ἐπίδειξις: Authorial Identity and Authorial Intention in Michael Chōniatēs’ Πρὸς τοὺς αἰτιωμένους τὸ ἀφιλένδεικτον’, and F. Bernard, ‘The Ethics of Authorship: Some Tensions in the Eleventh Century’, both in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), 202–24 and 41–60.

[36](#) Psellos, *Or. fun.* 3 (ed. Polemis), §10. For this passage see Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes’, 37–9.

- [37](#) Inter-school contests appear in the poems of Christopher Mitylenaios (poems 9, 10, 11), the Anonymous of Sola (see F. Bernard, ‘The Anonymous of Sola and the School of Nosiae’, *JÖB* 61 (2011), 81–8), and John Mauropos (poem 68). See also Bernard, *Writing and Reading*, 259–66.
- [38](#) Christopher Mytilenaios, *Various Poems*, ed. M. De Groote, *Christophori Mitylenaii Versuum Variorum Collectio Cryptensis* (Turnhout, 2012), poem 9.
- [39](#) M. Mullett, ‘Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople’, in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford, 1984), 173–201; Magdalino, *Empire*, 339 and elsewhere; I. Medvedev, ‘The So-Called θέατρα as a Form of Communication of the Byzantine Intellectuals in the 14th and 15th Centuries’, in N. G. Moschonas (ed.), *H επικοινωνία στο Βυζάντιο: Πρακτικά του Β' Διεθνούς συμποσίου* (Athens, 1993), 227–35; P. Marciak, ‘Byzantine Theatron: A Place of Performance?’, in: M. Grünbart (ed.), *Theatron: Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter* (Berlin and New York, 2007), 277–85.
- [40](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, ed. Kurtz-Drexl, vol. 2, no. 223, 265.23–8: πρόσιμεν οὖν ἀλλήλοις ὥσπερ ἐν πανελληνίῳ θεάτρῳ τὰς σὰς ἐπιδεικνύντες ἐπιστολὰς καὶ ἀντεπέξιμεν ταύτας καὶ ἀντιφιλοτιμούμεθα. καὶ ὁ τὴν χαριεστέραν ἐπιδεκνύων οὗτος νικῶν εἰς φιλίαν ἄπεισιν, οἱ δ’ ἄλλοι στυγνάζοντες ἔπονται.
- [41](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, ed. Kurtz-Drexl, vol. 2, no. 190.
- [42](#) Michael Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Paris and Venice, 1876), vol. 5, no. 205.
- [43](#) Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. Sathas, no. 85.
- [44](#) Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, ed. L. Westerink and J. Duffy, vol. 2 (Munich and Leipzig, 2002), no. 3.
- [45](#) P. Gautier, ‘Quelques lettres de Psellos inédites ou déjà éditées’, *REB* 44 (1986), 111–17, no. 25. For a similar use of the word, see Psellos, *Epistulae* (ed. Sathas), no. 182.
- [46](#) See ll. 11 and 60.
- [47](#) N. Gaul, *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik: Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Mainz, 2011), 18–23.
- [48](#) See also M. Grünbart, ‘Vorwort/Preface’, in M. Grünbart (ed.), *Theatron*, vii–x, here vii.

## 4

# L'administration Provinciale dans la Correspondance de Michel Psellos

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On connaît Michel Psellos historien, philosophe et homme de lettres aux goûts encyclopédiques. Personnalité politique de premier plan sous plusieurs empereurs, de Constantin IX à Michel VII, il fut aussi un praticien de l'administration, car il occupa diverses fonctions officielles. Nous avons, de la part de Psellos lui-même, des témoignages de son activité au service de l'Etat comme rédacteur de chrysobulles au nom de l'empereur<sup>1</sup> et surtout comme homme de réseau par ses nombreuses interventions auprès de fonctionnaires pour aider ses amis ou surveiller ses propres intérêts qui lui tenaient tout particulièrement à cœur. On a conservé environ cinq cent vingt lettres de ce personnage très actif sur tous les plans. Aucune n'est écrite sans raison, même si certaines des missives ne sont qu'un témoignage d'amitié ou l'occasion de montrer l'étendue de la culture acquise par l'épistolier. Mais, dans ce dernier cas aussi, il s'agit encore d'entretenir un réseau d'amis utiles pour la carrière politique ou pour déterminer sa place hiérarchique parmi les lettrés de la capitale.

Comme chacun sait, Michel Psellos commença à gravir les échelons administratifs dès le début du règne de Constantin Monomaque, empereur qui l'apprécia au point d'en faire l'un de ses conseillers préférés. Après avoir connu une brève éclipse de faveur, Psellos retrouva son crédit auprès des

empereurs, notamment Constantin X Doukas, avant de perdre sa position élevée pendant le règne de Romain IV Diogène, et, plus encore, après 1071–2. Beaucoup de lettres écrites durant les années 1040–70, qui correspondent à l’apogée des activités administratives de Psellos, sont difficiles à dater, par leur caractère général ou par l’impossibilité d’identifier avec précision le destinataire, parce que son nom manque, ou parce que sa carrière est mal connue.<sup>2</sup> On peut, malgré tout, distinguer deux moments privilégiés dans ces activités de Psellos, d’une part sous Monomaque, lorsque, jeune bureaucrate, il a lui-même exercé la fonction de juge en province, et, d’autre part, sous Constantin Doukas, lorsqu’il est devenu un personnage très influent qu’on sollicite, avec succès, et aussi un maître soucieux du destin de ses étudiants, engagés eux-aussi dans les carrières de l’administration provinciale. C’est de cette époque que date la majorité de ses lettres adressées à des juges de provinces.

Lorsque ces lettres, à caractère administratif, visent un objectif précis, un vocabulaire technique est utilisé, qui tranche avec la langue complexe et recherchée de Psellos. Comme l’ensemble des lettres de Théophylacte de Bulgarie étudiées par Margaret Mullett,<sup>3</sup> elles dessinent un réseau d’influence<sup>4</sup> et offrent sur l’administration des provinces un point de vue que ne donnent pas les sources narratives, mais qu’on peut en partie recouper par les archives monastiques. Ajoutons qu’elles apportent également des aperçus sur la personnalité de leur auteur.<sup>5</sup>

## L’expérience de Psellos

L’un des tout meilleurs connaisseurs des œuvres de Psellos, de leur composition et de leur vocabulaire, Jean-Claude Riedinger, a publié un article où il fit le point sur différentes étapes de la carrière de Constantin/Michel Psellos.<sup>6</sup> Par une lecture très attentive de ses lettres, il aboutit à une chronologie assez précise de sa carrière. Comme on le savait, Psellos est entré au service impérial sous Michel IV, sans doute sous

l'autorité de Jean l'Orphanotrophe. Il a accompagné un juge nommé Kataphlôros, envoyé en Mésopotamie, passant par le *chôrion* de Philadelphie. C'était sa première expérience professionnelle en province. Toutefois, ce n'était probablement pas sa première visite dans un thème; dans l'*Eloge* de sa mère, en effet, il fait allusion à un premier et court voyage à l'âge de seize ans, où il suivit un juge dans les terres de l'Ouest – entendons la partie européenne de l'Empire, très probablement la Thrace – plutôt que l'ouest de l'Asie Mineure, jamais qualifié ainsi dans les textes byzantins.<sup>7</sup>

Psellos revint dans la capitale où il gravit des échelons de la bureaucratie et devint l'un des proches de Constantin Monomaque. En rapprochant diverses lettres de sa correspondance, Riedinger estime que Psellos fut nommé juge des Bucellaires, assez tard sans doute dans sa carrière, peut-être seulement sous le règne de Constantin Doukas et que cette nomination fut la seule que le célèbre chroniqueur reçut sans doute comme juge provincial.

Quoiqu'il en soit, Psellos avait toutes les capacités voulues, puisqu'il connaissait les procédures administratives, pour avoir exercé durant des années la charge d'*asèkrêtis*, rédigeant les actes impériaux les plus divers, mais aussi pour avoir enseigné le droit. J.-C. Riedinger rejette l'idée que Psellos eût été *prôtoasèkrêtis*, car il interprète le verbe du fameux lemme d'un discours qui fait allusion à cette charge avec le sens de refuser et non pas de démissionner,<sup>8</sup> mais je crois qu'il faut garder ce dernier sens, bien attesté jusque dans le grec moderne, et admettre que Psellos démissionna de cette haute charge peu avant de prendre l'habit, soit à la fin du règne de Monomaque ou, moins probablement, au début de celui de Théodora.

Par sa correspondance et par quelques monodies, nous savons que Psellos eut de nombreux élèves, dont certains portaient de grands noms, ceux par exemple de Radènos, Aristènos, Kyritzès ou Cérulaire, et dont beaucoup poursuivirent leur carrière de fonctionnaire impérial dans les provinces ou dans les bureaux centraux. Sans doute Psellos eut-il des élèves quand il enseigna à titre privé, mais il est plus vraisemblable que les élèves qui apparaissent dans son réseau de relations soient ceux qui lui furent confiés par l'Etat en tant que *hypatos* des philosophes, pendant que Jean Xiphilin,

*nomophylax*, s'occupait de leur éducation juridique. Nous reviendrons sur ce point. La date de la nomination de Psellos comme proèdre des philosophes est inconnue. Elle ne saurait être antérieure à celle de Xiphilin à la tête de l'Ecole de Droit, créée par la nouvelle de 1047.<sup>9</sup> Mais est-elle parallèle à cette chaire, ou bien Psellos obtint-il ultérieurement, après bien des requêtes, la création de ce nouveau poste public?<sup>10</sup>

Michel Psellos occupa la fonction de juge de thème, mais où et quand reste sujet de controverse. Nous avons peu d'éléments assurés.<sup>11</sup> Après son entrée au service de l'empereur, sans doute peu après 1034, il accompagna un juge de la grande famille des Kataphlôroi, qui se rendait en Mésopotamie où il devait exercer sa charge. Il se dit fort jeune et l'on s'accorde à penser que cet épisode se déroula sous le règne de Michel IV. Ensuite, Psellos fut à son tour juge dans le thème des Bucellaires puisqu'il écrivit à un juge de cette province qui fut l'un de ses successeurs. Première question, à quel moment de sa carrière exerça-t-il cette charge? P. Gautier estime que ce serait avant le règne de Monomaque ou juste au début, c'est-à-dire vers 1040–5.<sup>12</sup> J.-C. Riedinger estime qu'il s'agit plutôt du règne de Constantin Doukas. Il a de bons arguments pour écarter une carrière trop précoce car Psellos, issu d'une famille d'assez modeste extraction, ne devait son élévation qu'à son talent, ce qui nécessite toujours du temps pour se révéler et interdit d'obtenir très jeune un poste éminent.<sup>13</sup> Après avoir acquis la faveur de Constantin Monomaque, Psellos pouvait prétendre à un tel poste, mais à un moment où il était sorti de charge depuis relativement peu de temps, il entretenait, semble-t-il, une correspondance avec des contemporains de Constantin Doukas. Si Psellos fut vraiment nommé proèdre des philosophes sous Constantin Monomaque, cette fonction, qui le retenait à Constantinople, était peu compatible avec l'exercice d'une charge provinciale. Cependant, nous savons par ailleurs que Psellos devint moine en 1054 ou au début de 1055. Certes, aucun obstacle ne l'empêchait de devenir ultérieurement conseiller de l'empereur, voire l'un de ses favoris. Il semble, en revanche, assez difficile qu'un moine devînt ensuite juge de thème. Pourtant, cet argument n'est pas sans exemple contraire: quelques stratégèges étaient d'anciens moines et les archives de l'Athos nous révèlent au moins

l'exemple de Grégoire Xèros, moine et juge à la fois, puisqu'il fut moine, hypertime, *dikaiophylax* et *anagrapheus* des thèmes de Boléron, Strymon et Thessalonique.<sup>14</sup>

Psellos fut-il uniquement juge des Bucellaires? C'est l'opinion de J.-C. Riedinger. Psellos, passant par Philadelphie, rappelle qu'il y vint précédemment à deux reprises, la seconde en tant que juge. Des habitants se rappelaient de ces deux épisodes. La Philadelphie la plus connue dans l'Empire est la capitale du thème des Thracésiens. Il y a cependant deux objections à une telle identification. Psellos affirme que cette Philadelphie était sur la route directe de la Mésopotamie, il la désigne comme un *chôrion* et appelle ses habitants des *chôritai*, ce qui ne correspond pas au grand *kastron* peuplé qu'était Philadelphie.<sup>15</sup> En conséquence, Philadelphie serait un toponyme du thème des Bucellaires, qu'on traverse assez naturellement pour gagner la Mésopotamie depuis Constantinople. Ces arguments sont forts, mais ils ne sont pas décisifs, puisque Psellos et son maître ont pu débarquer à Smyrne, car la voie maritime est rapide et de là une route permettait de gagner l'Anatolie centrale. D'autre part, tout lettré quittant Constantinople pour la province se sentait envoyé dans un pays rustre. Rappelons les commentaires de Michel Choniates sur sa métropole d'Athènes, si éloignée de l'image qu'il se faisait de la ville antique.<sup>16</sup>

Être juge des Thracésiens était l'un des meilleurs postes, celui qui couronnait une fin de carrière. Il faudrait supposer que Psellos ait été à nouveau juge assez tardivement ou qu'il a été vraiment favorisé par l'empereur, sans doute Monomaque. On notera que, dans sa correspondance, il ne se présente jamais comme un juge en poste. En conclusion, nous n'avons pas de preuve formelle de la présence de Psellos, en dehors des Bucellaires, et il serait logique qu'il ait exercé cette charge sous Monomaque, avant d'être *protoasèkrètis*. Il aurait été alors âgé d'une trentaine d'années. Ce qui est certain, c'est que l'éloignement de Constantinople, le temps d'exercer une, voire, au plus, deux charges de juge, fut assez bref.

## Psellos, juge

Psellos n'échappe donc pas au cliché du Constantinopolitain qui se sent perdu au milieu des populations sauvages dès qu'il est en province. «Le pays où je suis ne diffère en rien de la Bretagne: rares sont ceux qui parlent grec et même eux n'arrivent pas à le prononcer correctement»<sup>17</sup> ou encore: «il n'y a là où nous sommes ni Périclès, ni Thémistocle».<sup>18</sup>

Il est possible de reconstituer partiellement quelques-unes des affaires que Psellos eut à connaître comme juge. Certaines de ses décisions, en effet, furent remises en cause par ses successeurs, dont Môrocharzanès. Un habitant du thème des Bucellaires avait obtenu de Psellos un jugement favorable, or Môrocharzanès émit un avis contraire dans la même affaire. Cette lettre est intéressante sur les modalités de la justice, car elle révèle à quel point la sécurité juridique était faible, puisqu'il suffisait d'attendre que le juge, dont la décision était contestée par une partie, soit relevé de ses fonctions, pour tenter d'obtenir un nouveau jugement du juge du thème qui le remplaçait. Ce qui fut le cas ici, mais Psellos invitait le nouveau fonctionnaire, dont le nom est resté inconnu, à changer de nouveau la décision, sans doute parce qu'il connaissait personnellement le plaideur, soit, plus vraisemblablement, parce qu'il ne supportait pas de voir son jugement rejeté, lui qui s'estimait incomparable au plan de la science juridique.<sup>19</sup>

Psellos, comme juge des Bucellaires encore, intervint dans un conflit opposant l'évêque de Noumérika à des membres de la suite d'un percepteur. Il demande à son successeur de trancher l'affaire en faveur de l'évêque.<sup>20</sup> Comme J.-C. Riedinger l'a noté, nous ignorons où se trouvait exactement Noumérika, sinon que la ville était située à l'est du Sangarios.<sup>21</sup> Aucas où Noumérika se trouvait dans le thème des Optimates, il ne s'ensuit pas que Psellos eût été juge de cette province, car l'objet du contentieux pouvait porter sur des terres qui se trouvaient dans le thème voisin des Bucellaires. Le fond de cette affaire, de nature fiscale, nous est inconnu, mais Psellos a peut-être mis fin à des abus du droit d'hospitalité, sujet à de fréquentes disputes.

Lorsqu'il leur rendit visite, comme nous l'avons vu, lors d'un troisième passage, Psellos intercéda aussi en faveur des Philadelphiens, à nouveau dans une question fiscale, là encore difficile à cerner. On leur demandait une taxe, dit-il, alors que, au contraire, les Philadelphiens auraient dû bénéficier d'une redevance. Psellos en appelle à l'amitié pour que le juge satisfasse sa demande qui ne correspondait pas exactement, à ce qu'il semble, à la décision qui aurait été fondée sur le droit. Nous ignorons si la requête des Philadelphiens fut satisfaite, mais elle est révélatrice du mode de fonctionnement de la justice provinciale. Il y a gros à parier que, si le juge a accédé à la sollicitation de Psellos, le successeur de ce juge resté anonyme aura été saisi par la partie lésée, le fisc, et aura pu obtenir un renversement du jugement. Cela prouve à nouveau la fragilité des décisions de justice. Pour un autre exemple de la difficulté de rendre une justice sereine, la lettre de Psellos à un juge des Thraciens est particulièrement explicite.<sup>22</sup> Psellos intervient en faveur d'un homme jadis pourvu de grandes richesses, mais maintenant ruiné, peut-être par escroquerie, qui a perdu son procès en raison de l'intervention d'adversaires influents. L'ami de Psellos a interjeté appel auprès de l'empereur qui l'a renvoyé à une nouvelle décision du juge, correspondant de Psellos. Ce dernier a dû jouer un rôle dans l'annulation par l'empereur, car il soutient clairement le perdant.

Le départ du juge d'un thème vers la capitale ne coupait donc pas tout lien avec ses anciens administrés. Si l'une des décisions du juge est renversée par son successeur, la partie vaincue peut faire appel à celui qui l'avait favorablement traitée. Nous ignorons si ce type de démarche était efficace, mais le fait même qu'elle fût tentée prouve qu'elle avait des chances de succès. Car une affaire qui opposait deux juges risquait d'être tranchée à la cour de Constantinople et, dans ce cas, le poids d'un intercesseur présent sur place prenait toute son importance.

Psellos, lorsqu'il résidait dans la capitale, s'entremettait dans de nombreuses affaires. Il n'est pas possible de connaître l'intensité de ses interventions, car nous ne disposons que d'une partie des lettres envoyées par Psellos. Au mieux, nous avons un échantillon, dont on peut espérer qu'il est représentatif, puisqu'il porte tout de même sur un grand nombre de

missives. Il est certain que beaucoup de ses ingérences concernent des litiges à caractère économique, qui engagent des contestations fiscales.

Enfin, une série de lettres ont trait à la gestion des nombreux monastères que Psellos avait reçus en charisticariat et dont on sait qu'il en fut un bon protecteur.<sup>23</sup> Il s'évertue à faire respecter par les officiers du thème les exemptions fiscales qu'il a obtenues pour les monastères dont il touche les revenus.<sup>24</sup> Il reconnaît avoir souvent importuné par ses demandes le juge de l'Opsikion, Zômas, ce qui ne l'empêche pas de solliciter une modération du droit d'hospitalité pour le monastère de Médikion qu'il a reçu.<sup>25</sup> Quelquefois, Psellos s'entremet pour l'obtention d'un couvent en *charistikè* pour des amis<sup>26</sup> ou la transmission d'un de ceux qu'il détenait lui-même, comme Médikion, cédé au vestarque Anastase Lizix.<sup>27</sup>

## Psellos, intercesseur

C'est clairement l'occupation dominante de Psellos. Une trentaine de lettres ne contiennent guère d'informations, sinon que Psellos s'est entretenu de son interlocuteur auprès du *basileus*. Nous avons d'autres exemples de correspondances, comme celle de Théophylacte de Bulgarie, où le métropolite s'occupe avec soin de son vaste diocèse et ne cesse de lancer des requêtes à de nombreuses personnalités pour obtenir des avantages pour ses fidèles ou pour défendre les droits de son Eglise. Théophylacte n'est donc pas un intercesseur comme Psellos auprès de l'empereur, mais un solliciteur, alors que Psellos est proche du pouvoir, du moins au moment où il rédige ses lettres. On pourrait aussi citer Michel Chôniatès, métropolite d'Athènes, mais le gros de ses lettres conservées est postérieur à 1203. Avant cette date, il est en relation avec des ecclésiastiques, quelques parents et quelques hauts fonctionnaires devant lesquels il s'efforce de défendre les intérêts de sa métropole. Lui aussi est donc un solliciteur.<sup>28</sup>

Parmi la foule des quémandeurs, Psellos privilégie clairement ses parents, comme il le précise à Constantin, le neveu du patriarche Cérulaire, en

expliquant son choix d'intervenir pour un parent.

Devant ma porte afflue une foule innombrable, qui vient frapper en même temps notre esprit et nos oreilles. Certes, je prends l'avantage sur les autres et les persuade de renoncer, mais avec celui-là tous mes sortilèges ne servent à rien, car pour les contrebalancer tous il possède son lien de parenté avec moi. Cerné par conséquent entre la contrainte du lien de famille et une merveilleuse amitié, comment vais-je me débarrasser de ces deux tyrans? Il n'y a donc que toi seul qui possèdes l'élixir pour m'en débarrasser, celui «qui calme la douleur et le ressentiment, l'oubli de tous les maux». Mais tu ne vas pas préparer pour moi-même cette potion: enivre bien plutôt mon parent de tes faveurs en faisant entrer dans le mélange autant de vin pur qu'il pourra absorber et que tu pourras lui verser.<sup>29</sup>

Il y a donc une hiérarchie des priorités pour Psellos, au premier chef, lui-même, ses parents, ses anciens élèves, enfin ses «amis».<sup>30</sup>

Michel Psellos s'efforce en premier lieu de lancer de nombreuses carrières, en recommandant à des juges un nombre important de fonctionnaires débutants: a titre d'exemple, des notaires,<sup>31</sup> un dioecète,<sup>32</sup> un *praktōr*,<sup>33</sup> un protonotaire,<sup>34</sup> des *chrysotélaï*,<sup>35</sup> un élève,<sup>36</sup> un parent à l'orée d'une carrière.<sup>37</sup> Mais il faut remarquer que Psellos ne place pas les jeunes seulement en province, il recommande aussi des notaires aux chefs des services centraux.<sup>38</sup> Il intervient sans doute pour placer ainsi nombre de ses étudiants. Il s'occupe d'eux, même dans leur vie personnelle. Ainsi, il demande à un juge d'autoriser un notaire à regagner Constantinople pour rendre visite à son épouse, frappée par une grave maladie.<sup>39</sup> Ou encore plaide-t-il pour un notaire, traité trop durement par Xèros, juge des Thracésiens, qui avait confisqué l'argent, acquis illégalement par son subordonné. Psellos était intéressé par l'issue de l'affaire, car lui-même avait prêté une bonne partie de l'argent que le notaire devait faire fructifier. En autorisant ce dernier à garder son gain, Xèros permettait que Psellos fût remboursé.<sup>40</sup>

Son deuxième motif d'intercession est le service qu'il souhaite qu'un juge rende à ses amis, lesquels sont parfois de haute naissance. Parmi eux, les évêques et les moines sont privilégiés. On peut s'interroger sur la raison de cette relative prééminence. Parmi les évêques, il y a des amis que Psellos a connus dans la capitale. C'est ainsi qu'il continue de correspondre avec Jean

Maupous, alors que celui-ci avait quitté la capitale et avait été promu, contre son gré, métropolite d'Euchaïtes, dans la lointaine Paphlagonie. Une de ses interventions les plus intéressantes, sans doute sous Constantin X, concerne un moine, ancien et fameux général, Katakalon Kékauménos, alors retiré dans son domaine situé dans le thème de Colonée, notamment parce que celui-ci avait cessé de recevoir sa *roga* de curopalate.<sup>41</sup>

Il intervient aussi auprès des juges en faveur d'ecclésiastiques, comme l'évêque de Noumérika évoqué ci-dessus, ou celui de Sozôpolis, confronté à des ennemis que le juge des Anatoliens est censé repousser.<sup>42</sup> Même l'intérêt de Psellos pour certains monastères vient aussi de l'amitié qui le lie à l'un ou l'autre de leurs moines. Dans une lettre anépigraphe, mais sans doute adressée à un juge, il souhaite que son interlocuteur redresse une présumée injustice commise par un fonctionnaire du fisc à l'égard du monastère de Môrocharzanion, en le privant de biens fonciers, confisqués. Les moines comptaient dans leur rang Michel, un ancien vestès, jadis fortuné, qui avait renoncé aux biens de ce monde et dont on supposera que Psellos l'avait connu à la cour.<sup>43</sup>

Il arrive aussi qu'il fût sollicité en raison de son influence auprès du souverain. Ainsi, les moines du monastère du «Thaumaturge», en conflit avec le patriarche Emile, étaient venus, à plusieurs semble-t-il, à Constantinople, auprès de Psellos pour qu'il intercédaient en leur faveur et qu'il devînt leur protecteur, un statut différent de charistiaire. Psellos aurait été plutôt leur építrope.<sup>44</sup> Si l'on considère que l'établissement était assez important pour envoyer une délégation à Constantinople, et qu'il était situé dans le ressort du patriarcat d'Antioche, on pense évidemment au monastère Saint-Syméon du Mont-Admirable.<sup>45</sup>

Psellos s'entremet souvent pour faire l'éloge d'un fonctionnaire établi dans une province lointaine. Il fait l'apologie d'un duc d'Antioche, qui aurait réussi à rétablir une situation militaire compromise à son arrivée. Psellos trouve du reste un soutien chez l'ambassadeur venu d'Alep, qui proclame les vertus du duc.<sup>46</sup> Il rappelle aussi à l'empereur les rapides succès remportés par un duc, sans doute différent du précédent, dont le mérite était d'autant plus grand qu'il était sans expérience militaire. On pensera à l'eunuque

Nicéphoritzès, plus habitué à manier la comptabilité que les armes, qui fut duc d'Antioche<sup>47</sup> sous Constantin X Doukas, lorsque Psellos était particulièrement influent à la cour. Il console un juge de Cappadoce, qui se trouve au milieu d'une population mal dégrossie, en lui affirmant que les oreilles du *basileus* sont emplies des louanges que lui-même chante sur les vertus du juge.<sup>48</sup> Tout absent de la cour craint, en effet, les calomnies qui peuvent se répandre à son sujet.<sup>49</sup>

Il s'intéresse surtout à la carrière de certains juges. Une des lettres les plus plaisantes fut envoyée à un juge anonyme qui voulait changer de thème pour obtenir une «meilleure» circonscription. On apprend ainsi – sans en être vraiment surpris – qu'il existe une cotation des thèmes, certains étant considérés comme excellents, d'autres plus médiocres, bien entendu sous le rapport de l'argent qu'on peut tirer de la fonction. Psellos conseilla au juge qui souhaitait sa mutation de demander un thème «moyennement» coté, car les bons avaient été soit récemment pourvus, soit occupés depuis plus longtemps, mais les juges y séjournait encore car il y avait beaucoup d'affaires à régler.<sup>50</sup> Psellos s'est particulièrement employé en faveur de Nicolas Sklèros,<sup>51</sup> un parent de Romain, que Psellos avait bien connu à la cour de Monomaque. Ce juge avait subi un revers de fortune, lorsque ses biens avaient été confisqués. A plusieurs reprises, Psellos intervint en sa faveur. On notera que la confiscation des biens n'entraînait pas l'exclusion de la fonction publique, puisque Nicolas Sklèros demande à retrouver ses biens alors qu'il quittait son poste de juge de la Mer Egée.<sup>52</sup>

Ce rôle d'intercesseur présentait quelque avantage, puisque Psellos recevait parfois en échange des gratifications, jusqu'à une jument envoyée par un évêque, ou un âne par un juge.<sup>53</sup> Parfois, il n'hésitait pas à réclamer des produits locaux non pour lui, mais pour ses amis et sa famille. Il osa réclamer des textiles produits à Antioche au patriarche de la ville.<sup>54</sup> Toutefois, plus que la valeur des présents reçus, somme toute modeste eu égard aux revenus de l'intéressé, c'est l'efficacité du réseau et le positionnement de Psellos vis-à-vis de ses correspondants, qui sont en jeu.<sup>55</sup>

## Les relations de Psellos

Psellos s'adresse principalement, nous l'avons vu, aux juges de thèmes, qui constituent un groupe restreint sans doute, d'autant que certains fonctionnaires, pour diverses raisons, se trouvent momentanément sans poste, soit une centaine de personnes au plus, au moment où Psellos est lui-même à ce niveau de responsabilité. Ces juges passent d'un thème à l'autre au cours des mutations, qui semblent avoir été assez rapides, peut-être plus que celles concernant les militaires, et dépendent aussi des changements de règne, en sorte que ce groupe compta sans doute de cent cinquante à deux cents titulaires, au cours des trente ans de carrière active de Psellos. Si l'on observe les intitulés des lettres de Psellos, on peut mettre de côté les lettres écrites à des amis ou à des patrons, et, parmi celles dont le destinataire reste identifiable, on compte finalement un nombre assez restreint de juges. Psellos, nous l'avons vu, écrit pour régler des conflits concernant ses biens immobiliers et donc aux juges de l'Opsikion en priorité. Les autres juges de la correspondance de Psellos paraissent choisis par ce dernier pour les relations personnelles qu'ils entretiennent avec lui.

Bien qu'un grand nombre de lettres soient anépigraphes ou que d'autres donnent le titre du destinataire sans son nom, se dessinent cependant, d'une part, un réseau géographique et, d'autre part, une liste de destinataires préférentiels.

Psellos écrit à des juges des Bucellaires, son ancien thème, de l'Opsikion (trente-cinq lettres à des fonctionnaires de ce thème), des Optimates, des Thracésiens (quatorze missives), des Anatoliens, de Paphlagonie, des Arméniaques, du Charsianon, de Cappadoce, de Macédoine, de Thrace (onze lettres), des Drogoubites, du Péloponnèse (Katôtika).<sup>56</sup> La liste n'est sans doute pas exhaustive car beaucoup de lettres ne précisent pas le lieu d'exercice du destinataire. On remarque qu'aucun thème de la frontière n'est cité, que ce soit vers l'Est ou le Sud-Est, vers l'Adriatique ou vers les contrées bulgares. Les provinces orientales, Charsianon, Cappadoce, Arméniaques, sont représentées par une ou deux lettres seulement. Le gros de la

correspondance rayonne autour de la capitale, Thrace, Macédoine, Bucellaires, Opsikion, Thracésiens, thème proche par la voie maritime. Ce résultat est logique, car ce groupe de provinces correspond assez largement à la zone où les élites civiles de Constantinople, auxquelles appartiennent les amis de Psellos, possédaient la majorité de leurs biens fonciers.

Le cas d'Antioche est particulier parce que Psellos garde des liens avec deux des autorités de la métropole syrienne, le patriarche qu'il connaît personnellement et le césar Jean Doukas, qu'il avait rencontré lorsque ce dernier n'était encore que simple stratège du temps de Monomaque.

Quelques-uns des correspondants sont bien identifiés par leur prénom et leur nom transmissible. Certains sont connus seulement par leurs noms de famille, comme Mauropos, juge des Cibyrrhéotes ou Xeros, juge des Thracésiens. D'autres sont parfois définis par des titres, comme le fils du drongaire, un membre de la famille Cérulaire. Certains ne sont nommés que par leur seul prénom, tel Pothos, qui revient à plusieurs reprises, ou Serge, dont l'identité ne fait guère de doute, car il s'agit de Serge Hexamilitès, qui fit une très brillante carrière jusque dans les premières années du règne d'Alexis Comnène. Enfin, parmi le grand nombre de lettres anépigraphes, quelques-unes peuvent retrouver une attribution en fonction de leur contenu.

Les correspondants de Psellos sont issus d'un milieu homogène, actifs principalement durant les vingt dernières années de la vie de Psellos, si l'on admet que ce dernier s'est éteint en 1078.<sup>57</sup> Certains sont bien identifiés. Eustate Choirosphaktès, protonotaire du drome, puis *prôtoasèkrètis*, tué à Mantzikert en 1071. Basile Malésès, déjà cité, comte des eaux sous Romain Diogène, après avoir été juge de thème, se joignit, en 1071, à la rébellion de Romain Diogène, libéré par les Turcs, contre Michel VII.<sup>58</sup>

Ces relations semblent se partager en deux catégories, les collègues de Psellos, ceux de sa génération ou proches par l'âge, avec lesquels il dialogue sur un pied d'égalité, et d'autre part tout un groupe envers lequel il manifeste le privilège de l'expérience, prenant une position de supériorité. Parmi les représentants de ce groupe, se distinguent d'anciens élèves de Psellos, qui accomplit une importante carrière de professeur, d'abord à titre

privé, puis à titre officiel, lorsque Constantin Monomaque le promut à la tête de la chaire de philosophie. Il semble que Psellos ait apprécié la métaphore familiale, à l'imitation des *basileis*, dont il rédigea un temps les lettres destinées aux autres souverains. Psellos parle de ses frères, comme Nicolas Sklèros, qui furent des condisciples ou qui, à tout le moins, appartenaient à la même génération.<sup>59</sup> On peut encore citer Serge Hexamilitès, un Xèros, Maupous, le frère de Jean, qui était plus âgé que Psellos ou encore Zômas, qui semble vouloir abandonner sa charge de juge pour devenir moine, comme Psellos l'avait déjà fait.<sup>60</sup> Quand il s'adresse à ses «neveux», il s'agit de ses élèves qui étaient donc, en principe, nettement plus jeunes que leur professeur.<sup>61</sup> Deux au moins sont appelés «fils» par le maître, ce qui est plus troublant, au point que l'un d'eux, Basile Malésès, a fait l'objet de plusieurs études, dont la dernière, celle d'Eva de Vries fait de lui le mystérieux gendre de Psellos, époux de sa fille adoptive.<sup>62</sup> Plus précisément, si Psellos fut bien leur professeur dans sa chaire publique, cela expliquerait le nombre important de ses disciples et anciens élèves qui devinrent juges. Citons, sans être exhaustif, Serge Hexamilitès, Michel Radènos, le fils du *protoasèkrètis* Aristènos,<sup>63</sup> Léon, Pothos, fils de la *droungaria*, les neveux du patriarche Cérulaire.

Il faut revenir sur les observations de Riedinger sur la nature du poste d'*hypatos* des philosophes qui serait symétrique de celui de Xiphilin pour le droit, puisque la rhétorique et le droit constituaient les deux compétences demandées aux administrateurs de l'Empire. Sans aucun doute, l'entrée de Psellos au Palais lui a procuré des amitiés de valeur. Peut-être connaissait-il antérieurement les frères Doukas, car il eut avec eux et leurs parents par alliance, les Cérulaire, d'anciens et solides liens. Cependant, c'est le poste d'*hypatos* des philosophes qui l'aura mis en relation avec les rejetons de l'élite administrative de la capitale et avec leurs parents, lui permettant d'accélérer sa propre carrière. De par cette fonction, il fut en contact avec de nombreux juges et responsables de bureaux auxquels il recommandait ses étudiants, dont on peut imaginer qu'ils étaient très peu nombreux à suivre au même moment son enseignement. S'il réussissait dans sa mission, il obtenait la reconnaissance d'influentes familles. De plus, quelle que soit la

situation politique, il avait des amis au Palais, ce qui contribue à expliquer la présence quasi permanente de Psellos dans ce lieu de pouvoir, quels que fussent les soubresauts politiques.

En conclusion, la correspondance de Psellos nous révèle un homme d'influence, principalement sous Constantin X Doukas. Psellos fut un enseignant soucieux de l'avenir de ses élèves, qui cherchait à les placer dans des fonctions auprès de personnages influents. Une partie de ses correspondants ou de leur famille sont connus de lui depuis l'époque où Psellos progressait rapidement dans la carrière, sous Constantin Monomaque et aussi sous Isaac Comnène, l'exemple des Doukas étant le plus spectaculaire. Ses relations se situaient principalement dans les «bons» thèmes. Il n'oubliait pas ses intérêts personnels, puisque nombre de lettres concernent la gestion de ses biens propres. Il joua un rôle d'intercesseur auprès de l'empereur en faveur de ses protégés, juges de province, et de ses amis, lorsque ces derniers subissaient des exactions en tout genre. La correspondance nous offre un tableau des rapports habituels entre la capitale et les provinces. En revanche, comme j'avais tenté de le montrer jadis en analysant rapidement les informations que nous offrait la correspondance de Psellos sur l'état des provinces, les lettres de Psellos ignorent très largement la vie des habitants des provinces, à une époque où les invasions causaient déjà d'importants troubles, mais il est vrai plus à l'Est.<sup>64</sup> L'encyclopédisme de Psellos n'incluait pas la science géographique pratiquée par beaucoup de savants du monde musulman. Ce qui intéresse notre auteur, c'est avant tout de converser avec ses amis et obligés, comme s'ils résidaient encore dans la capitale, lui-même se chargeant d'évoquer le milieu des hauts fonctionnaires lettrés de la cour.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Psellos prétend, à cette occasion, avoir corrigé l'humble position que se donnait Constantin Monomaque vis-à-vis du calife fatimide, quand il envoyait des chrysobulles à ce dernier (Michel

Psellos, *Chronographie*, éd. É. Renauld, 2ème édn (Paris, 1967), II, 64 = *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, éd. D.R. Reinsch (Millennium Studies 51) (Berlin et Boston, 2014), 190–1.

[2](#) Michael Jeffreys va publier un résumé de l'ensemble des lettres de Psellos avec une datation, quand cela est possible, et a l'intention de donner un commentaire plus détaillé de l'activité administrative de Psellos que je le fais ici. Je le remercie de m'avoir envoyé le premier jet de son texte.

[3](#) M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot, 1997), 163–222.

[4](#) M. Mullett, ‘The Detection of Relationship in Middle Byzantine Literary Texts: The Case of Letters and Letter-Networks’, in *L'épistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique: Projets actuels et questions de méthodologie*, éd. W. Horändner et M. Grünbart (Dossiers byzantins 3) (Paris, 2003), 63–74.

[5](#) E. de Vries, ‘Les amitiés dangereuses: Psellos et Léon Paraspondylos’, *BSI* 60 (1999), 315–50.

[6](#) J.-C. Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes de la vie de Michel Psellos’, *REB* 68 (2010), 5–60.

[7](#) Traduction J.-C. Riedinger: ‘Je séjournais alors par hasard dans la campagne à l'extérieur de la Ville, après un court voyage en compagnie d'un homme tout à fait éminent par l'éloquence, à qui avait été confiée la fonction de juge dans ce qui n'était pas une petite partie du territoire occidental de l'empire’; Ugo Criscuolo (ed.), *Michele Psello, Autobiografia: Encomio per la madre. Testo critico, introd., trad. e comment.* (Naples, 1990), §XLI. Selon toute probabilité, il s'agissait d'un juge de Thrace.

[8](#) Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὅτε παρητήσατο τὴν τοῦ πρωτοαηκρῆτης ἀξίαν (Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes’, 47).

[9](#) J. Lefort, ‘Rhétorique et politique: trois discours de Jean Mavropous en 1047’, *TM* 6 (1976), 265–303.

[10](#) L'argumentation de J.-C. Riedinger sur la création de ce poste public me semble convaincante. Il y a eu un décalage chronologique entre les créations des chaires, mais on ne peut le délimiter avec précision (Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes’, 37–47).

[11](#) Il n'y a pas de biographie systématique, sauf le vieil ouvrage de G. Zervos (*Un philosophe néoplatonicien du XIe siècle, Michel Psellos: sa vie, son œuvre, ses luttes philosophiques, son influence* (Paris, 1920)), et celui plus récent, mais à visée plus large, de J.N. Ljubarskij, *H προσωπικότητα καὶ τὸ ἔργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού* (Athènes, 2004).

[12](#) P. Gautier, ‘Quelques lettres inédites ou déjà éditées’, *REB* 44 (1986), 144, suivi par Ljubarskij, Ψελλός, 45–6; Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes’, 26–30.

[13](#) En revanche, certains des élèves de Psellos paraissent avoir exercé assez tôt une charge de juge, cependant ils étaient issus de grandes familles comme Anastase Lizix, mort assez jeune, mais dont le père et le beau-père étaient proëdres à une date où cette dignité était encore assez peu répandue (S.G. Mercati, ‘Versi di Basilio Cecaumeno in morte di Anastasio Lizix’, *Studi bizantini* 1 (1925), 149–66, repris dans *Collectanea byzantina*, I (Rome, 1970), 336–42. Le nom de Lizix remonte au IXe siècle (J. Gouillard, ‘Deux figures mal connues du second iconoclasme’, *Byz* XXXI [1961], 371–87, repris dans *La vie religieuse à Byzance* (Variorum Reprints) (Londres, 1981), n° VI), du moins si c'est bien le nom porté sur le sceau d'un cubiculaire, gestionnaire du vestiarion impérial (V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin. 2, L'administration centrale* (Paris, 1981), n° 691).

[14](#) *Actes d'Iviron. 2, Du milieu du XIe siècle à 1204*, éd. diplomatique par J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidès, D. Papachryssanthou, avec la collab. de V. Kravari et H. Métrévéli [Archives de l'Athos 16] (Paris, 1990), n° 45 (daté de 1093).

[15](#) Psellos, *MB* V (=Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, V, éd. K.N. Sathas, (Paris, 1876)), no 180, 459–61.

[16](#) Psellos lui-même rappelle comment un dioecète envoyé dans cette cité se considérait en Scythie (Psellos, *MB* V, n° 33, 268). Un siècle et demi plus tard, l'impression du nouveau métropolite d'Athènes était identique [*Michaelis Choniatae Epistulae*, rec. F. Kolovou (*CFHB, Series Berolinensis* 41) (Berlin et New York, 2001), ep. 8, 11–3].

[17](#) Gautier, ‘Quelques lettres’, 144.

[18](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 169, 431.

[19](#) *Michaelis Pselli scripta minora magnam partem adhuc inedita*, éd. par E. Kurtz et F. Drexel (Milan, 1941), t. II, n° 65, 99.

[20](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 18, 257.

[21](#) *La Bithynie byzantine*, éd. par B. Geyer et J. Lefort (Réalités byzantines 9) (Paris, 2002), 406.

[22](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 66, 100.

[23](#) M. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 10) (Paris, 1992) 565–8. Sur le charisticariat, voir entre autres, H. Ahrweiler, ‘Charisticariat et autres formes d'attribution de fondations pieuses aux Xe–XIe siècles’, *ZRVI* 10 (1967), repris dans *Études*

*sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, Variorum Reprints (Londres, 1971), n° VII, 27; P. Lemerle, ‘Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance: les monastères donnés à des laïcs, les charisticaires’, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l’année 1967*, janvier–mars, 22–3; J. Darrouzès, ‘Dossier sur le charisticariat’, *Polychronion: Festschrift F. Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), 150–65.

[24](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 77, 311.

[25](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 29, 263.

[26](#) Par exemple, il obtient le couvent de Pythonos pour un parent de Jean Mavropous: Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 221, 262–3.

[27](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 202, 230–1. Le même personnage avait bénéficié plus tôt, sans doute au temps de l’impératrice Théodora, d’un *solemnion*, grâce à l’intervention de Psellos (Psellos, *MB* V, n° 10, 240–1). Pour la datation de cette lettre, qui fait mention d’un protosyncelle dispensateur de libéralités, sans aucun doute Léon Paraspondyle, cf. P. Gautier, ‘Monodies inédites de Michel Psellos’, *REB* 36 (1978), 86.

[28](#) F. Kolovou, Μιχαὴλ Χωνιάτης: Συμβολὴ στὴ μελέτη τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ ἔργου του. Tò Corpus τῶν ἐπιστολῶν (Ponemata 2) (Athènes, 1999), particulièrement 78–184.

[29](#) Lettre à Constantin, magistre et sacellaire (Psellos, *MB* V, n° 46, 278; traduction J.-C. Riedinger).

[30](#) M. Mullett, ‘Byzantium: A Friendly Society?’, *Past and Present* 118 (1988) 3–24; E. Limousin, ‘Les lettrés en société: «φίλος βίος» ou «πολιτικὸς βίος»?’ *Byz* 69 (1999), 344–65.

[31](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 35, 63–5; II, n° 61, 93–4 (notaire nommé Moschos); II, n° 86, 114–15; II, n° 109, 137–8; II, n° 142, 169; II, n° 153, 176; II, n° 155, 183; II, n° 157, 183; II, n° 248, 297–8.

[32](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 83, 112–13.

[33](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 32, 267–8.

[34](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 118, 144–5.

[35](#) Psellos, *MB* V n° 21, 258 (*chrysotèles*) n° 43, 276; n° 248, 297–8.

[36](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 91, 119–20.

[37](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 144, 170–1

[38](#) Psellos, *MB* V n° 136, 379–80. Ce notaire est aussi recommandé par la *magistrissa* Dalassènè, qui lui est apparentée.

[39](#) Lettre au juge de Thrace et Macédoine, Chasanos, Psellos, *MB* V, n° 39, 272.

[40](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 47, 279–80.

[41](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 59, 91–2.

[42](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 41, 274–5.

[43](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 99, 342.

[44](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 138, 165.

[45](#) V. Grumel, ‘Le patriarchat et les patriarches d’Antioche sous la seconde domination byzantine (969–1084)’, *EO* 32 (1933) 144–5, hésitait à placer sa date d’entrée en fonction avant 1074. K.-P. Todt, qui s’appuie dans sa thèse inédite sur la correspondance de Psellos, considère qu’il a occupé le siège dès le début des années 1060 (‘The Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in the Period of the Renewed Byzantine Rule and in the Time of the First Crusades’, *History of the Antiochian Greek Orthodox Church: What Specificity?* (Balamand, 1999), 35). Voir aussi, J.-C. Cheynet, ‘Michel Psellos et Antioche’, *ZRVI* 50 (2013) *Mélanges L. Maksimović*, 413–5 (il faut corriger l’allusion à l’impératrice Eudocie qui n’est pas mentionnée dans le texte).

[46](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 43, 70–3.

[47](#) *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, 5: The East (continued), Constantinople and Environs, Unknown Locations, Addenda, Uncertain Readings*, ed. by E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides (Washington, DC, 2005), n° 9.7.

[48](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 110, 354–5.

[49](#) Jean Mavropous rassura ainsi l’un de ses correspondants, engagé dans une querelle locale, l’assurant que personne n’avait porté de fausses accusations contre lui, mais qu’il devait se garder de tout grief contre l’archonte qui était lui-même fort influent [A. Karpozilos, *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous Metropolitan of Euchaïta* (Series Thessalonicensis) (Thessalonique, 1990), 47, commentaire, 199–201].

[50](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 255, 302–3.

[51](#) Sur le personnage, cf. W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi: eine prosopographischsigillographische Studie* (*Byzantina Vindobonensia* 9) (Wien, 1976), 93–7.

[52](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 56, 88–9.

[53](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n°<sup>s</sup> 66 et 67, 298–9. Le destinataire renvoie l’animal pour en réclamer un autre, plus grand, mieux adapté à sa taille.

[54](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora* II, n° 138, 166.

[55](#) Sur le rôle des cadeaux, voir en dernier lieu, F. Bernard, ‘Exchanging Logoi for Aloga: Cultural Capital and Material Capital in a Letter of Michael Psellos’, *BMGS* 35 (2011), 134–48; F. Bernard, ‘Greet Me with Words: Gifts and Intellectual Friendships in Eleventh-Century Byzantium’, in M. Grünbart (éd.), *Geschenke erhalten die Freundschaft: Gabentausch und Netzwerkpflege im europäischen Mittelalter. Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums Münster, 19.–20. November 2009* (Byzantinistische Studien und Texte 1) (Munster, 2011), 1–11.

[56](#) Ljubarskij, *Ψελλός*, 154–69.

[57](#) Il existe une vaste bibliographie sur ce point, voir en dernier lieu A. Kaldellis, ‘The Date of Psellos’ Death, Once Again: *Psellos* was Not the Michael of Nikomedeia Mentioned by Attaleiates’, *BZ* 104 (2011), 651–64. L’auteur conteste effectivement l’identification avec Michel de Nicomédie, mais admet l’année 1078 comme la date probable du décès de Psellos.

[58](#) N. Duyé, ‘Un haut fonctionnaire byzantin du XIe siècle: Basile Malésès’, *REB* 30 (1972), 167–78, article critiqué par A. Kazhdan et J.N. Ljubarskij [‘Basile Malésès encore une fois’, *BSI* 34 (1983), 219–20].

[59](#) W. Seibt montre que Nicolas Sklèros a atteint le sommet de sa carrière comme drongaire de la Veille, très probablement en 1084 (Seibt, *Skleroi*, 96–7). Il pouvait être plus jeune que Psellos de quelques années. Ajoutons cette lettre anépigraphe dont le correspondant est qualifié de frère spirituel dans laquelle Psellos rappelle les années communes d’étude (Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 11, 12–13; Riedinger, ‘Quatre étapes’, 10–11).

[60](#) Psellos, *MB* V, n° 190, 484–5.

[61](#) É. Limousin, ‘Étude du fonctionnement d’un groupe aristocratique à Byzance au XIe siècle: Juges et lettrés dans les correspondances’ (thèse inédite de l’Université de Poitiers, 1995), 209.

[62](#) E. de Vries, ‘Psellos et son gendre’, *BF* 23 (1996), 109–49.

[63](#) Psellos, *Scripta minora*, éd. Kurtz-Drexel, II, n° 224. Le *prōtoasēkrētis* est appelé un ‘frère’.

[64](#) J.-C. Cheynet, ‘L’Asie Mineure, selon la correspondance de Psellos’, *BF* 25 (1999), 233–42.

## Section II

## Social Structures

## The Peira and Legal Practices in Eleventh-Century Byzantium

*James Howard-Johnston*

Dearth of primary material is the *leitmotiv* of Byzantinists, in melancholy mood, after striving and failing to delve as deeply as they would like into the mentalities of Byzantines or the realities of their social and economic existence. How we wish that we had documentary material available in the quantities to which western medievalists are accustomed, or more epigraphic material in the form of the inscriptions which, when aggregated, cast so clear a light on so many aspects of the history of the classical world rather than the brief legends on lead sealings with which we must make do, or the plethora of narrative historical sources and geographical surveys which may at times overwhelm the Islamicist. We can, however, console ourselves with the thought of the oddities in the written materials bequeathed to us by that very unusual entity which we study – a once highly militarized society which sacrificed much in its long guerrilla war for survival in the seventh–ninth centuries and which then fell eagerly upon its cultural heritage from late antiquity in the era of revived greatness which followed. A few texts start out before the eyes of scholars in neighbouring fields and prompt some envy: (1) the long line of biographies of holy men grounded in lived, local and individual reality, of which the *Life of Lazaros of Galesion* is a fine eleventh-century example; (2) that extraordinary text

which provides us with a platform for viewing the world around Byzantium at the beginning and middle of the tenth century (the misnamed *De Administrando Imperio*); and (3), from the late eleventh century, the exposition in writing of the somewhat jaundiced opinions and advice of Kekaumenos.<sup>1</sup>

The *Peira* ranks as high as any of these unusual and informative texts. It is a legal work, gravid with Roman law and case narratives, dating from the middle of the eleventh century. It runs to 300 pages in the critical edition by C.E. Zachariä von Lingenthal, published in 1856. It has been used but only selectively by historians in the century and half which has passed since then. It is difficult to use because the case summaries are often opaque, telegraphic and packed with legal terms of art. It is also difficult to discern what actually happened in the real world outside the court, from abridged accounts of proceedings which are skewed to bring out the key legal question at issue. These problems multiply when the identities of plaintiff and defendant are not revealed. As William Danny has observed in his 2007 Oxford doctoral thesis, *Society and the State in Byzantium, 1025–1071*, the *Peira* provides a set of very narrow apertures through which to look back on the eleventh-century justice system. Nonetheless it provides a rich body of documentary material, which, in aggregate, illuminates all the facets of life likely to feature in cases brought to court – quarrels over wills and dowries, contractual disputes, clashes of interest over property, urban and rural, questionable marriages, unpaid debts and crimes. The great, the good and the bad figure prominently, especially those who resorted too readily to violence – above all several members of the Skleros family.<sup>2</sup>

Legal historians have neglected the *Peira* until recently. This was partly because of the high number of Byzantine legal texts that were in need of publication and the rich and complex manuscript traditions in which texts of individual works are entwined. There are large numbers of manuscripts of popular works, like the eighth-century *Nomos Georgikos* (70 MSS) and *Nomos Rhodikos* (60 MSS), or the tenth-century alphabetically ordered *Synopsis Major of the Basilica* (well over 40 MSS), and, in total, some 560 legal manuscripts dating from the ninth to fifteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Philological

and palaeographical work on these texts has chiefly occupied the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History at Frankfurt over the last few decades. In addition, the *Peira* and the great judge, Eustathios Romaios, who heard the cases detailed in it, have come in for severe criticism. He has been portrayed as above all a *rhetor* who culled whatever he needed to back his own judgments from the transmitted corpus of Roman law, rather than basing his judgment on the law. Too concerned with his own view of equity, he has been accused of arbitrariness and casuistry in his application of the law. This critique which originated with a public lecture to an audience of lawyers given by Dieter Simon (published as *Rechtsfindung am byzantinischen Reichsgericht* [Frankfurt, 1973]) has proved influential.<sup>4</sup> It is only recently that legal historians such as Bernard Stolte and Boudewijn Sirks have begun to rehabilitate Eustathios. When the *Peira* has been fully analysed, I suspect that he will be revealed to have been a great judge operating in the Roman law tradition.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows, I shall first discuss the text, then the justice system, the judge and his judgments. Given the state of *Peira* studies, what follows will be sketchy and provisional.

## The text

The *Peira* is preserved in a single manuscript dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, Florence Bibl. Laur. 80.6, a compendium of legal texts, beginning with the *Eisagoge*, containing *inter alia* Attaleiates' *Ponema Nomikon* and Psellos' *Synopsis Legum*, and ending with the *Peira*. The title is modelled on that of Theophilos' paraphrase of the Justinianic *Institutes* – ‘called by some *Peira* and by others a teaching manual based on the practice of the great lord Eustathios Romaios’. The principal aims of the work as well as its basis are thus made plain – it was to act as a convenient reference work for judges and lawyers, and at the same time to commemorate the achievements of a great man.<sup>6</sup>

Zachariä von Lingenthal's edition is in urgent need of revision, not least because he himself only saw the manuscript briefly and relied for his edition on a copy made by an assistant. Even cursory scrutiny identifies passages in need of emendation, while the whole text cries out for translation and for historical and legal commentary. It is a great pity that Ludwig Burgmann who has been at work on a new edition has been side-tracked into tracing the percolation of *Peira* material through the complicated capillary system of Byzantine legal manuscripts into later texts, above all into the *Hexabiblos* of Constantine Armenopoulos (1345) but also as *scholia* in later manuscripts of the *Basilica*. The promised edition will not appear in the near future.<sup>7</sup>

In the meantime we can make do with the Zachariä von Lingenthal edition, which was reproduced, not quite perfectly, in a later version published in Greece.<sup>8</sup> It consists entirely of legal material. Superfluous verbiage, rhetorical turns, agonistic performances by advocates, moving perorations have been excised. The only literary touches come from Eustathios himself, who, like most judges, clearly strove to express himself in elegant prose and is recorded as including one literary reference (to Homer) on one occasion (25.25). It is a dry text, consisting largely of arguments and views put forward by Eustathios himself, together with excerpts from the authoritative compendium of Byzantine law, the *Basilica* produced in the reigns of Basil I and Leo VI. Such quoted material predominates in some chapters – for example those on deposits (no.6), pledges and interest (no.19), freemen and slaves (no.28), witnesses (no.30) and privileges of the fisc (no.36). In others a set of case summaries is then followed by a solid phalanx of quoted material – this runs to some ten pages in the second part of the long chapter on sales and purchases (no.38). Much of the legal advice takes the form of statements on the part of Eustathios, interspersed with records of legal debates, some almost certainly moots, involving high courts judges. The case law presented does not amount to more than a third of the text. It is taken from some 200–300 of the formal legal opinions (*hypomnemata*) on which judgments (*semeiomata* or *semeioseis*) were based.<sup>9</sup>

The editor makes occasional appearances, usually putting a question as Eustathios is developing an argument, which then elicits some careful reasoning from Eustathios. It looks as if most were put when Eustathios was drafting his opinions. The questions, it should be noted, are sensible, often intelligent.<sup>10</sup> On one occasion, he was deputed by Eustathios to carry out some research on old tax records (15.10). On another, he intervened in a legal disputation between judges, presumably at a moot (25.69). There is nothing to indicate that he was a junior member of the judiciary. The questions he asks and some of the rare slips which he makes point to his being a legal assistant or legal secretary, whose primary motivation for producing the *Peira* was admiration of Eustathios and devotion to his memory.<sup>11</sup>

He was a more than competent editor, above all when it came to presenting summaries of the judge's written opinions. He was adept at producing a concise and clear *précis*, preserving the substance of an opinion and excising extraneous detail and proper names. He was equally good at giving a full summary, with only minor changes of wording.<sup>12</sup> His editorial interventions are confined to the introduction of relevant excerpts from the *Basilica* as backing material (possibly from marginal notes in the original *hypomnemata*, possibly bundled up with them in Eustathios' personal archive, possibly looked up) and to the excision of many personal names.<sup>13</sup> This selective anonymization demands explanation. My view, for what it is worth (and it does accord with Oikonomides') is that the names of most litigants were removed because they would mean nothing to readers, that it was only those of celebrities which were retained, with certain exceptions out of deference to friends and allies of the great judge.<sup>14</sup> This would help explain why some two-thirds of the surnames which surface are independently known from other sources or are attested on lead sealings.

The editor had a sound basic understanding of the law. He was able to devise seventy-five thematically distinct chapter headings and to put his material, whether case law, legal pronouncements or *Basilica* excerpts, into the appropriate category. But commentators have been puzzled by the ordering of the chapters. Distinct branches of law – the law of property, the law of persons, legal procedure etc – are not brought together in clusters of

related chapters but may come up in widely dispersed chapters. Nor are chapter headings arranged in alphabetical order. We are left then with chronology as the last possible principle of organization. Oikonomides noted that there is a general tendency for Eustathios' dignity to grow as we advance through individual chapters, suggesting that the editor pulled out the cases in the order in which they were filed (and cases presumably were dated).<sup>15</sup> The same may be suggested for the overall structure.

Eustathios began as a plain judge and, presumably, served in one or more themes. This would help explain why questions of land tenure and the application of imperial land legislation, together with associated matters, feature so prominently at the beginning of the text (cc. 2, 5–9, 15, 18–23). We know that much later, just before his elevation to the apex of the judicial system, Eustathios served as *Quaestor*, one of the four senior judges of the empire, whose remit concerned wills.<sup>16</sup> It is noticeable that there is a clustering of chapters concerning wills – c. 41 on the *Lex Falcidia*, 43 on bequests, 48 on intestacy, 49 on illicit marriages, and 54 on inheritance – towards the end of the text. Contract law (cc. 44–7) and individual crimes (cc. 42, 55, 61, 63, 64, 66, 68) are also to be found towards the end, a sign perhaps that it was only as Chief Justice (Drungar of the Watch) that Eustathios was involved in such highly contentious cases, involving highly placed individuals.

A secondary organizing principle is also discernible. Thematically connected chapters have been bunched close together if possible. So we have some family law at cc. 12, 14, 16, 17, 24 and 25; loans figure in cc. 26, 27 and 29, court procedure at cc. 30–5, the privileges of the fisc and land tenure (again) at cc. 36–40. Yes, there were anomalies – brought about, I would guess, when chronologically contiguous cases dealt with divergent matters – but the text as a whole was not a chaotic jumble of material. It was intended to be and indeed was a competent manual of law, which was made user-friendly by the listing of chapter headings at the outset.

## The justice system

Not much has been written about the judiciary and courts in Byzantium. One fundamental change, introduced probably in the course of the seventh and early eighth century, as the new theme structure took shape, seems to have escaped notice. The judicial function which had been combined with executive administrative authority in the provinces of the high Roman and late Roman empire was hived off. In the late ninth and early tenth centuries theme judges can be shown to have been independent of other branches of local government, both civil and military. The Strategos, military governor, who ranked as the most senior imperial representative in a theme, had no authority over the theme judge or other civilian chief officers, unless there was a military emergency.<sup>17</sup> Judicial appointments were made in the emperor's name from the centre, post-holders being held accountable through the appeal system to the high court in Constantinople.<sup>18</sup> It was a system of checks and balances, put in place when it was most needed, in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries when themes were few and military governors were all too powerful.

With the revival of Byzantium in the tenth century, manifest primarily in its steady piecemeal expansion into the Arab borderlands and in the conquest of the core territory of Bulgaria, judges rose in importance in the interior themes which were now shielded by an outer zone of more militarized provinces. They acquired the executive powers once exercised by Roman magistrates and became provincial governors.<sup>19</sup> At roughly the same time (the second half of the century), the justice system at the centre was reformed with the creation of a new high court, known as the Velon, comprising twelve senior judges. They were selected from the corps of judges known as the judges of the Hippodrome, by which was meant the covered Hippodrome, next to the passage linking palace to Hippodrome proper.<sup>20</sup> The next significant development can be dated to the second quarter of the eleventh century and should probably be credited to Romanos III Argyros, himself a former high court judge. In addition to the two senior

judges who had presided over the judiciary in the past, both apparently with empire-wide appellate functions, the Eparch of the City who headed the administration of Constantinople and the metropolitan area (defined as extending to a distance of 100 miles from the city [51.9], and the Quaestor, responsible *inter alia* for appeals over inheritance, the post of Drungar of the Watch, formerly commander of the inner palace guard, was transformed into that of the chief justice who presided over the Velon high court.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence of sealings shows that judges of the Hippodrome and indeed of the Velon were posted to the provinces, and that they might, in addition to their judicial and administrative duties, take on fiscal responsibilities or managerial oversight of crown lands. By the second quarter of the eleventh century their presence can be documented well away from the centre, in effect encroaching on the former domain of *strategoi* in the inner belt of Armenian lands annexed in the tenth century.<sup>22</sup> A clear impression of the awe in which judges were held can be obtained from the contemporary history of Aristakes of Lastivert.<sup>23</sup> Of their power in the core territory of the early medieval state, in western and north-western Asia Minor, we are left in no doubt by Psellos' many letters seeking favours or recommending protégés. Legal training and the consequent ability to make sound judgments (*kriseis*) thus seem to have opened the way to bureaucratic careers of many sorts. It was probably as important as the sort of fluency developed in agonistic speechifying highlighted by Psellos.<sup>24</sup> Membership of the Hippodrome court was, it may be suggested, a formal recognition of a cadre akin to an Inn of Court in England, a cadre which was conscious of its professional status and which, if subjected to effective moral guidance from above, may have developed its own *esprit de corps*, like the high officials of the late Sasanian empire whom Procopius portrays as taking pride in an austere, high-minded code of public service.<sup>25</sup>

There were, of course, many others besides judges involved in the dispensing of justice. Court officials appear occasionally in the *Peira: synedroi*, 'assessors', sources of legal advice for less qualified judges; *akroatai*, 'hearers', local magistrates who might be called upon to witness key legal procedures – for example the opening of an important sealed

will;<sup>26</sup> notaries, administrative assistants; *tachygraphoi* (stenographers); *antigrapheis* (copyists), responsible for making accurate copies of legal documents, for example, wills when they were opened; and finally *epistoleis* (literally ‘writers of letters’), presumably reporters, responsible for writing up official reports of proceedings, or, conceivably, freelance correspondents serving a wider readership.<sup>27</sup> There were also special jurisdictions, some of which are mentioned at *Peira*, 51.29, all governed by the Roman principle that a commanding officer or head of department had jurisdiction over his subordinates – the examples cited are the Hetaireiarches and Protovestiaros (palace security personnel), the Parathalassites (merchant seamen), the Drungar of the Fleet (naval personnel), the Eparch of the City (urban craftsmen, including those manufacturing reserved silks).

Finally the law itself, as is amply demonstrated by the *Peira*, was Roman through and through, in its Justinianic form, as mediated (1) through Greek translations, summaries and comments of the sixth-century law professors and (2) through the compilation commissioned by the first two Macedonian emperors. The *Basilica* and the Justinianic works lurking behind it provided an immense fund of instruction and guidance for those administering the law in Byzantium. Naturally judges, especially high court judges, each with his own particular interests, each with his own set of judicial experiences, would reach different conclusions, given the wealth of prescriptive material to hand and the unexpected contingencies and ever-varying particularities turned up by human life. No wonder then that there was debate, sometimes long, convoluted and intricate, in the high court between proponents of different judgments, after the submission and reading of *hypomnemata*. Eustathios himself did his utmost to find common ground when there were apparent contradictions between different laws (51.16). He was adamant that the law should always be obeyed where it was clear and unambiguous, even if the resulting judgment might seem inequitable (51.3). On this strict adherence to the law, Justinianic law, rested the whole structure of the justice system.

## The judge and his judgements

Eustathios may well have belonged to a family of lawyers. He mentioned in an aside to his assistant, the anonymous editor, that his great-grandfather had been a judge and had appeared before the imperial court (30.76). He started his own judicial career in the reign of Basil II (976–1025), well before the turn of the millennium, during the patriarchate of Nicholas Chysoberges (980–92), and was commended, during an appearance before the emperor, by Symeon Magistros and Logothete (64.1).<sup>28</sup> We next catch a glimpse of him in April 1025, when he was one of several signatories to a lengthy judicial decision easing the prohibited degrees of marriage (a specialist subject of his). At that time he held the high rank of Patrician.<sup>29</sup> Next we see him returning to the high court after a spell as a overseer of a theme's tax administration (*anagrapheus*) and devising a compromise acceptable to his divided colleagues in the case of the Protopatharios Himerios who seduced a girl of senatorial rank, made her pregnant, agreed to marry her but then reneged, after the death of his father Solomon. They imposed a swinging fine of five pounds on Himerios, 150 nomismata for the *iniuria* of breaking off the engagement with a girl of high status and 210 for the seduction and deflowering of the girl. This took place soon after the accession of Romanos III Argyros on 12 November 1028.<sup>30</sup>

Eustathios' career now took off, under the patronage of Romanos, who had been his colleague (a severe one to judge by his line on Himerios, which was to convict him of rape and have him flogged as well as fined) before his elevation to the throne. Eustathios held several senior posts in the reign (1028–34), perhaps in preparation for his taking charge of the justice system. He was successively *Mystikos*, *Exaktor*, *Logothete* of the *Dromos* and *Quaestor*, before his designation as Chief Justice, *Drungar* of the Watch. The only fixed point in this rapid ascent is his tenure as *Logothete* of the *Dromos*. This was the post he was recorded as holding when he was present at sessions of an ecclesiastical tribunal convened by the patriarch Alexios Stoudites in October 1029 and May 1030.<sup>31</sup> By the first of those dates he had

been promoted in rank from Patrician to Vestes. Later, after his appointment as Chief Justice, he was given the highest rank to which anyone not related to the emperor could aspire, that of Magistros.<sup>32</sup> It is as Magistros that he appears mostly in the *Peira*. His assistant was so used to referring to him as such that he did not replace Magistros with the post he actually held at the time of many of the cases summarized in the text.<sup>33</sup>

It is likely that Eustathios retired or was retired soon after his old colleague Romanos Argyros died on 11 April 1034. By that date he was in his seventies, if not older, since he must have been born in the late 950s or early 960s, at the latest, to have become a judge by 992 at the latest. The *Peira* itself was definitely written after Romanos' death, since it is mentioned twice (49.4, 58.4), and almost certainly well before the accession in 1042 of Constantine IX Monomachos when the Skleros family came back into favour and when the emperor gave his backing to two bright young intellectuals, Michael Psellos and John Xiphilinos, with very different ideas about the law.<sup>34</sup> Inspired by them, Constantine was soon initiating a thoroughgoing reform of legal education.<sup>35</sup> It was to be centralized thenceforth in a state law school, directed by a Nomophylax (Guardian of the Law), who would ensure that there was a single stream of authorized instruction, based on law books supplied from the palace library. The school was established in a building on the site of the charitable complex of St George of Mangana, founded by Constantine. In future no one could go into any branch of the law without a certificate from the law school, whether as a writer of legal documents (*symbolaiographos*), advocate (*synegoros*) or member of a professional body (like that of the *taboularioi*). The ultimate object, as the emperor declared in what sounds very much like a speech given at the opening ceremony (save for the specification of the emoluments of the Nomophylax – perhaps added to the written version), was to eliminate the sort of disputation and debate between judges which is recorded in the *Peira* and which could be regarded as essential if true justice was to be administered.<sup>36</sup>

The two young men thus took over the education of budding bureaucrats, Xiphilinos in charge of the legal side of education as the first and, as it

turned out, the only Nomophylax, and Psellos in charge of the honing of their writing, speaking and thinking, as Consul of the Philosophers. Their interests were theoretical – concerned with first principles, logical rigour in argumentation, a philological approach to texts and exactitude in the application of law. Xiphilinos' main contribution took the form not of judgments but of research into the Justinianic corpus so as to improve understanding of the *Basilica*.<sup>37</sup> There is no evidence that Xiphilinos had any practical experience. Psellos may have served as a provincial judge early in Constantine's reign, but his tenure must have been short and his experience limited.<sup>38</sup> There was, as was only to be expected, considerable opposition from the legal profession. An anonymous psogical pamphlet was picked up (it had been left behind a church) which derided the appointment of Xiphilinos. Psellos responded with a counter-pamphlet, defending his friend and attacking in intemperate language the character and expertise of the author of the *psogos*, unmasked as Ophrydas, a former high court colleague of Eustathios'. Psellos could not disguise the scale of the opposition in the course of his diatribe.<sup>39</sup> In the long run it was to prove victorious. Xiphilinos was dismissed and disgraced in 1054. Nothing thereafter is heard of law school or Nomophylax.

The judiciary, schooled in their craft by Eustathios, prevailed. Eustathios' admiring former assistant, it may be conjectured, was joining in the opposition when he put together the *Peira*.<sup>40</sup> The prominence of cases which resulted in convictions of members of the Skleros family may not have been accidental. The editor may have been signalling that Eustathios (by then probably dead) would have denounced the reforms introduced by an imperial regime, to which Maria Skleraina belonged as the emperor's acknowledged mistress from 1034 until her death in 1045.<sup>41</sup> Eustathios might have been a stickler about the letter of the law, when it was clear and unequivocal (51.3), but, like the great majority of judges in Roman (and non-Roman) legal systems, he did not reduce the delicate process of judgement to the sort of mechanical application of the relevant law to the case at issue which seems to have been envisaged by the reformers. No compilation, however elaborate, however soundly based on generations of legal

experience, duly modified by statute, could possibly cover all eventualities. Eustathios used his judgement. He brought morality as well as the law to bear on the cases brought before him. He also recognized the need for some flexibility in its application, for what the Byzantines termed *oikonomia*, which chiefly took the form of softening harsh punishments. The guiding principle behind Eustathios' judgments, within the framework of Roman law, was equity. He strove for real *justice*.

Justice, it should be stressed, had to be achieved under the canopy of the large body of law inherited from the late Roman empire and only modified in a few particulars by subsequent emperors. It was surely this commitment of Eustathios' to Roman law that earned him the sobriquet Romaios, 'the Roman'. Bernard Stolte and Boudewijn Sirks have demonstrated that he was attentive to fine points of law, taking as their principal field of investigation inheritance law – the institution (*enstasis*) of heirs, the preallocation of an estate among children (*divisio parentis inter liberos*) and the application of the *Lex Falcidia* which reserved portions of an estate for the deceased's children. They both view Eustathios as a skilful judge, operating with the necessary discretion and discrimination within the prescriptions of Roman law.<sup>42</sup>

Key principles of Roman law inherited from the late republic were still being applied in the eleventh century. *Patria potestas* lived on, as strong as ever.<sup>43</sup> Persons of higher social status (*honestiores*), now defined as bearers of titles, continued to enjoy rights denied their inferiors (*humiliores*).<sup>44</sup> Offensive behaviour towards them, especially if coercion were involved, was punishable as a crime. As much care as before was taken over the legal instruments that determined inheritance. A will was invalid unless it was signed by at least five witnesses in good standing. Further precision was given by two rulings of Eustathios': signatures could not be added later after the initial drafting and signing of a will, to make up the minimum number (14.24); if one witness was judged to be of poor character, because of a past conviction, doubt was cast on the worth of the other signatories and the will was declared invalid, however many of them there were (14.20). Wills once approved were archived in the courts and special procedures were laid down

for their opening, reading and copying (in whole or part), on application to the judge (14.21). At the level of the high court, in one very special case, elaborate measures were taken, on Eustathios' instructions, to record every stage of the process from the initial removal of seals to the final resealing of the document (14.11).

Recent imperial laws issued to defend the village commune, regarded as the basic unit of the Byzantine state, were enforced with the same rigour. Eustathios did not hesitate to apply the social and economic legislation of tenth-century emperors which proscribed acquisition of property by the privileged, termed the *dynatoi*, those with social and economic power, from the *penetes* ('poor'), those lacking such power (9.1–3). Whatever property in a village might have been seized by a *dynatos*, whether an individual or church or monastery (i.e. for which they could not produce title deeds going back before 'the great famine' of 927–8), was without fail to be returned to its rightful owner or, in his absence, to his fellow villagers (whose claims were carefully calibrated in the laws), even if, in an extreme case, the village had been reduced to a single household (9.9). Its peasant inhabitants were given rights denied to the *dynatoi*: if there were any delay in the legal proceedings, they were to hold the disputed property for the duration of the case (40.12); whereas oral testimony and circumstantial evidence, with or without further reference to tax records, were enough to prove their title, their grander adversaries were required to produce deeds documenting their ownership before 927–8 (8.1, 9.6). The rights of the fisc were upheld with similar vigour: whereas there were strict time limits on claims against the fisc, there were none on the fisc (9.7, 36.14).

Much more could be said about the subtlety and strength of the legal argumentation deployed on an extraordinarily varied set of cases by Eustathios and the soundness of the judgments that he reached.<sup>45</sup> The *Peira* does provide, as its editor intended, a rich store of information about many aspects of the law. But it is only with translations of a large sample of case summaries and full commentaries, which would fill a book, that justice can be done to the legal reasoning of Eustathios.

# Conclusion

Few historians of Byzantium have doubted the importance of its late antique Roman heritage. Culturally it was Roman through and through: the Roman faith (Chalcedonian Christianity) was preserved and dominated the thought-world of Byzantines in the eleventh century, save perhaps for a few bold intellectuals in the capital; the language was Roman (Greek); the classical heritage in literature, art and thought was treasured. The same continuity was discernible in its institutions: the governmental system remained basically unchanged, a military dictatorship disguised as a constitutional monarchy; even the old provincial system was pickled and preserved within the Church. Ideologically Byzantium could not and did not relinquish claims to political pre-eminence on earth, based on its Roman imperial past and its role as God's prime agent on earth. As for the mechanics of government, Byzantium was by far the most Roman of the sub-Roman successors of the late empire. Communications in the form of all-weather roads, means of exchange in the form of coins issued by government mints, and relatively widespread literacy underpinned a ramified bureaucratic system, which was capable of tapping towns and villages, and within them individual households, for taxes and of channelling the revenues raised to fund essential state services.

It should cause no surprise then to find that the commitment to a high standard of law and order, which had distinguished Roman territory from lands beyond the frontier, was maintained through the early Middle Ages in the successor state. It was a commitment which was re-emphasized by the early Macedonian emperors, in their well-advertised programme of renewal. In the case of the law, this involved a return to the highest standards of the Justinianic age. Roman law was refurbished and then applied, firmly and sensitively, to society at large. The *Peira* only allows us a few glimpses of the reach of the law, for the simple reason that the specifics of individual cases – names and places – tend only to be mentioned when they would have been of interest to readers. So it is mainly cases involving members of well-

known families or important monastic houses that can be fixed geographically, the great majority of them in the capital, the metropolitan region and the core themes of western Asia Minor, where, for example, the main ecclesiastical litigants outside Constantinople were to be found – the metropolitan sees of Nicaea, Klaudioupolis, Ephesos and Ankyra.<sup>46</sup> But appeals to the high court did come from further afield: we know of one (64.6) against a ruling by a judge of Hellas and Peloponnese, on the flimsy grounds that his signature omitted the breathing on Hellas; another (43.5) came from the theme of Mesopotamia (in south-west Armenia), three former holders of the post vying for a bequest left to the local judge; a case heard by Eustathios at Stenon concerned the metropolitan see of Melitene, in a small theme adjoining Mesopotamia (51.10); finally, the property which was to be confiscated from a Bourtzes convicted of treason, according to a procedure laid down by the high court (60.1), was almost certainly located mainly in Cappadocia where Bourtzes' influence was concentrated.

Access to the high court and to the high standards of justice that it upheld was thus not restricted to an inner zone of fortunate themes. Nor was it only cases involving celebrities or powerful local interests that came before it on appeal. The mesh of Roman justice was fine. The poor and humble were protected. So were those better-off who failed to repay a loan – furniture, clothing, essential members of staff (such as cook, secretary and bailiff) were exempt from seizure by creditors (6.16). Issues as trivial as the allocation of donations to the pilgrim shrine in the village of St Auxentios in the distant theme of Chaldia, between the church, villagers with ancient rights and newcomers to the village (15.8), or the exact extent of the landholding of the monastery of Blachna in the village of Ryakia in Bithynia (15.10) were picked up and resolved, if necessary in Constantinople. The grip of the courts was no less effective at the level of the locality than that of the fiscal system. Byzantium was intensively governed, held together by all the normal sinews of a developed state.<sup>47</sup> The law, on which so much light is cast by the *Peira*, was as important as any of these sinews.

## Notes

- [1](#) *Vita S. Lazari*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, III, 508–88, trans. R.P.H. Greenfield, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion* (Washington, DC, 2000); Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, trans. R.J.H. Jenkins, *CFHB* 1 (Washington, DC, 1967); *Cecaumeni Strategicon et incerti scriptoris De Officiis Regiis libellus*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt (St Petersburg, 1896; repr. Amsterdam, 1965).
- [2](#) *Peira*, 15.14 (seizure of monastic property by the Magistros Skleros), 15.16 (Maria Skleraina *versus* the estate of the Patrician Pantherios – a claim to 62 pounds), 23.7 (numerous charges against the Magistros Skleros, including loss of property, false imprisonment and assault – see also 69.5), 42.11 (assault on a clergyman by the Magistros Skleros), 42.18–19 (coercion of villagers by Protopsaltarios Romanos Skleros), 50.4 (planning objection by the daughter of the Magistros Skleros), 65.15 (a son's guarantee that his father would remain in the service of the Patrician Basil Skleros).
- [3](#) I.P. Medvedev, *Vizantijskij zemledel'cheskij zakon* (Leningrad, 1984), 26–92; D.G. Letsios, *Nomos Rhodion Nautikos – Das Seegesetz der Rhodier: Untersuchungen zu Seerecht und Handelsschiffahrt in Byzanz* (Rhodes, 1996), 45–7; N.G. Svoronos, *Recherches sur la tradition juridique à Byzance: la Synopsis Major des Basiliques et ses appendices* (Paris, 1964), 3–15, 89; L. Burgmann, ‘Juristische Buchproduktion in Byzanz’, in V. Colli (ed.), *Juristische Buchproduktion im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt, 2002), 247–67.
- [4](#) P.E. Pieler, ‘Rechtsliteratur’, in H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 2 vols (Munich, 1978), II, 343–480, at 346–51; N. Oikonomides, ‘The “Peira” of Eustathios Romaios: An Abortive Attempt to Innovate in Byzantine Law’, *FM* 7 (1986), 169–92, repr. in N. Oikonomides, *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade* (Aldershot, 1992), no. XII, at 183–92; H. Saradi, ‘The Byzantine Tribunals: Problems in the Application of Justice and State Policy (9th–12th c.)’, *REB* 53 (1995), 165–204, at 174–5.
- [5](#) G. Weiss, ‘Hohe Richter in Konstantinopel: Eustathios Rhomaios und seine Kollegen’, *JÖB* 22 (1973), 117–43, at 122–6.
- [6](#) *Repertorium der Handschriften des byzantinischen Rechts*, I (Frankfurt, 1995), 86–7 (no.68). Comments on title: Ludwig Burgmann to special session of Peira Seminar at Oxford (10 February 2009).

- [7](#) Burgmann, ‘Juristische Buchproduktion’; A. Schminck, ‘Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen aus dem 11. Jahrhundert’, *FM* 3 (1979), 221–79, at 222–3.
- [8](#) I.D. and P.I. Zepos, *Jus graecoromanum* (Athens, 1931), IV, 5–260.
- [9](#) Burgmann’s estimate (seminar of 10 February 2009).
- [10](#) *Peira*, 6.15–16; 14.20; 17.14; 23.3 and 6; 25.22; 43.5; 49.5; 51.16 and 29; 66.26.
- [11](#) B. Sirks, ‘Peira 45.11, a Presumed Succession Pact, and the Peira as a Legal Source’, in C. Gastgeber (ed.), *Quellen zur byzantinischen Rechtspraxis: Aspekte der Textüberlieferung, Paläographie und Diplomatik*, Österr.Ak.Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl., Denkschriften 413 (2010), 189–99, at 198–9.
- [12](#) *Peira*, 49.36 and 49.37: respectively précis and full summary of the first and second parts of the original *hypomnema* edited and translated with commentary by Schminck, ‘Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen’, 224–40.
- [13](#) Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 180.
- [14](#) Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 180.
- [15](#) Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 178–9.
- [16](#) *Peira*, 16.20, 51.29. See Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 173.
- [17](#) Philotheus, *Cleto-rologium*, ed. and trans. N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles* (Paris, 1972), 108–11; Leo, *Tactica*, iv.33, ed. and trans. G.T. Dennis, *The Taktika of Leo VI*, CFHB 49 (Washington, DC, 2010), 56–7; Nicephorus Phocas, *De velitatione bellica*, 19.7–8, ed. G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, trans. G. Dagron, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l’empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986), 110–11.
- [18](#) *Peira*, 51.10.
- [19](#) H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, ‘Recherches sur l’administration de l’empire byzantin aux IX–XIe siècles’, *BCH* 84 (1960), 1–111, at 67–76; Saradi, ‘Byzantine Tribunals’, 173–4.
- [20](#) Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 319–23.
- [21](#) N. Oikonomidès, ‘L’évolution de l’organisation administrative de l’Empire byzantin au XIe siècle (1025–1118)’, *TM* 6 (1976), 125–52, at 133–5.
- [22](#) See Chapter 4 by Jean-Claude Cheynet in the present volume.

[23](#) *Patmut'iwn Aristakeay Vardapeti Lastivertts'woy*, ed. K.N. Yuzbashian (Erevan, 1963), 106, 130–2, trans. M. Canard and H. Berbérian, *Aristakès de Lastivert, Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne* (Brussels, 1973), 96–8, 117–19.

[24](#) See Chapter 3 by Floris Bernard in the present volume.

[25](#) Procopius, *Bella*, i.11.33, ed. and trans. H.B. Dewing, *Procopius, History of the Wars*, I (Cambridge, MA, 1971).

[26](#) M.T.G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850* (Oxford, 2015), 107–13, 218–23.

[27](#) *Peira*, 14.11; 51.21.

[28](#) R.-J. Lilie, C. Ludwig, T. Pratsch, B. Zielke et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit, Zweite Abteilung (867–1025)*, 8 vols (Berlin, 2013), II, 294–8 (Eustathios 21870); V, 143–6 (Nikolaos 26019); VI, 228–33 (Symeon 27504).

[29](#) Schminck, ‘Vier eherechtliche Entscheidungen’, 222; Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 171–2.

[30](#) *Peira*, 49.4. See Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 172.

[31](#) G. Ficker, *Erlasse des Patriarchen von Konstantinopel Alexios Studites* (Kiel, 1911), 11.31–4; 19.3–4.

[32](#) Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 172–4.

[33](#) Occasionally the post held is noted – for example, plain judge (1.1 and 8; 2.4 and 5; 7.8 and 10; 8.24, etc), Quaestor (16.20), Exaktor (44.1), Mystikos (65.1).

[34](#) Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 171, 175.

[35](#) W. Conus-Wolska, ‘Les écoles de Psellos et de Xiphilin sous Constantin IX Monomache’, *TM* 6 (1976), 223–43, at 223–38.

[36](#) Zepos, *Jus graecoromanum*, I, 618–27.

[37](#) W. Wolska-Conus, ‘L’École de droit et l’enseignement du droit à Byzance au XIe siècle: Xiphilin et Psellos’, *TM* 7 (1979), 1–107.

[38](#) Cheynet, Chapter 4 in the present volume.

[39](#) Michael Psellus, *Orationes forenses et acta*, ed. G.T. Dennis (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 125–42. See Conus-Wolska, ‘Les écoles’, 238–43.

[40](#) Dating of text: 1040s (Simon, *Rechtsfindung*, 7); around 1045 (Schminck, ‘Vier ehrechte Entscheidungen’, 223); late 1030s, or, possibly, very early 1040s (Oikonomides, ‘Eustathios Romaios’, 175–6).

[41](#) M. Jeffreys et al., *Prosopography of the Byzantine World* (2011), available at <http://pbw.kcl.ac.uk> (accesssed 9 May 2014): Maria 64.

[42](#) B. Sirks, ‘The Peira: Roman Law in Greek Setting’, in *Studi in onore di Remo Martini* (2009), III, 583–91; Sirks, ‘Peira 45.11, a Presumed Succession Pact’; B. Stolte, ‘The Peira and the Basilica’.

[43](#) *Peira*, 1.1–15; 49.4, 10, 12.

[44](#) *Peira*, 49.4; 61.1–6.

[45](#) Eustathios’ accomplishments are also well illustrated in the fourteen-page *Tractatus de peculiis* (ed. M.T. Fögen and D. Simon, *FM* 10 (1998), 261–318), a model of lucid argumentation backed by copious legal citations, which may have originated as a memorandum written for his fellow judges in a case.

[46](#) *Peira*, 7.6 (Ankyra), 15.10 (Klaudiopolis – see also 19.16), 15.17 (Nikaia), 36.24 (Ephesos – see also 58.5).

[47](#) Contra L.A. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950–1100* (Cambridge, 2004).

## 6

# Beyond the Great Plains and the Barren Hills

## Rural landscapes and social structures in eleventh-century Byzantium

*Peter Sarris*

Located on the Anatolian plateau, near the border of the old Roman provinces of Galatia and Cappadocia, one finds the remains of a Byzantine rural settlement known in Turkish as Çadir Höyük, or ‘Tent Mound’.<sup>1</sup> The landscape in which the ‘Tent Mound’ stands is not one that inspires: when travelling through the region in 1907, Gertrude Bell described it as ‘a melancholy land, in spite of its lakes and mountains ... with every step into the interior you feel Asia ... monotonous, colourless, lifeless, unsubdued by a people whose thoughts travel no further than to the next furrow, who live and die and leave no mark upon the great plains and the barren hills.’<sup>2</sup> The greatest historian of the English landscape, W.G. Hoskins, wrote of Wordsworth that ‘poets make the best topographers’ and there is little here for the poet to work with.<sup>3</sup> But in spite of Gertrude Bell’s gloom, in recent years Çadir Höyük has in fact been the focus of some extremely thought-provoking and highly suggestive archaeological work directed by Dr Ronald Gorny of the University of Chicago, whose findings in many ways chime

with broader perspectives on the evolution of Byzantine society in Anatolia from roughly the sixth to eleventh centuries.

Gorny and his team have revealed at Çadir Höyük an early Byzantine phase of settlement, dating from the sixth or seventh century, characterized by the presence of large, spacious, well-planned and well-built structures, containing some luxury and imported items among the ceramic and material remains, indicative of the last phase of late antique economic expansion that we associate with the ‘Age of Justinian’.<sup>4</sup> During the ninth and tenth centuries, however, new structures were constructed on the foundations of the earlier Byzantine buildings. These new buildings were more cramped in terms of the articulation of interior space, and reveal greater sub-division of rooms. Luxury goods and imported fine-wares are virtually non-existent.<sup>5</sup> Most interestingly of all, the utilitarian domestic structures identified on the mound (such as the ground-floor storage buildings and stables, above which a sort of residential *piano nobile* was constructed) were surrounded by a fortification wall, giving the domestic buildings the outward appearance of a fortified compound or *kastron*.<sup>6</sup>

All in all, the impression is of a more isolated, militarized, and self-sufficient community, reminiscent of the more self-contained and isolated vision of the middle Byzantine *oikos* contained in the writings of Kekaumenos (the ‘unfriendly society’ described by Margaret Mullett). But settlement on the site there still was.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the eleventh century, however, the settlement was definitively abandoned in circumstances of considerable disorder. Sigillographic evidence reveals that the site ceased to function around 1070, in the period immediately preceding the battle of Manzikert. More suggestive still, within the mud-brick walls of the stable complex have been found the remains of numerous animals – primarily cattle, but also including sheep, pigs and probably a donkey. The remains are mostly complete, and the bones bear no butchers’ marks or scorch marks: indicating, as the excavators have noted, that the animals probably died *in situ* of natural causes. The stable also contained a small hoard of coins and a number of Christian artifacts, including a lock etched with the image of St Blaise, a saint connected with the healing of domestic cattle. The

abandonment of the livestock would suggest that the inhabitants of late Byzantine Çadir Höyük simply locked up the animals, entrusting them to the care of St Blaise, and fled in haste, intending to return. But return they never did, and, irrespective of any hopes for saintly intervention, the animals simply starved to death where they stood. This sad and poignant end, as Marica Cassis has concluded, ‘gives us a glimpse into the uncertainty of populations on the Anatolian plateau in the face of the impending Turkish invasion.’<sup>8</sup>

In spite of such uncertainty, the direct impact of the Seljuk advance on social and economic life on the Anatolian plateau should not be exaggerated. This is because, across much of central and eastern Anatolia, a structural shift had already taken place in the nature of the agrarian economy as a result of the chronic military insecurity caused by Persian and Arab warfare in the seventh and eighth centuries. That warfare meant that pastoralism and regimes of mixed farming had come to predominate; although the more stable military conditions of the tenth century permitted a limited revival in cereal cultivation and more organized traditions of stock-raising in certain parts of the region. This is very much the message, for example, from the conclusions of the inter-disciplinary Anglo-American and Turkish team working in the vicinity of Lake Nar, whose findings suggest that the dislocation caused by the eleventh-century crisis following the Byzantine defeat at the battle of Manzikert essentially served to push rural society in central and eastern Anatolia down a developmental path along which it was already headed, with a broadly similar cultural landscape being maintained through from the late Macedonian era to the Seljuk and Ottoman periods.<sup>9</sup>

The social and economic impact of the Turks would be most pronounced with respect to those regions of western Asia Minor, such as the lower Maeander valley, which had been largely shielded from the Persian and Arab attacks of the earlier period, but which, by virtue of the military events of the late eleventh century, suddenly found themselves reduced to the condition of militarily vulnerable marchlands. So, for example, the hitherto unfortified landscape of the Maeander delta would, within a generation of Manzikert, find itself defended by a cat’s cradle of rural fortifications.<sup>10</sup> As

in the seventh and eighth centuries, warfare was one of the main determinants of Byzantine social and economic evolution, and in particular, one of the main factors behind shifting patterns of land use. As in the seventh century, so too in the eleventh: in those areas that were conquered rapidly, pre-existing social and economic institutions tended to remain intact, preserved by those more locally rooted *oikoi* and those more locally entrenched village communities that did not have the option to simply ‘up sticks’ and flee. It was in those areas that were not conquered, but which were subjected to growing military insecurity, that change is likely to have been most pronounced, although here too, as we shall see, there were to be exceptions.

For what has become increasingly apparent in recent years is the highly variable, and in some cases extremely limited, evidence for change in the Byzantine countryside across the centuries leading up to Manzikert. This new understanding of the Byzantine social and economic landscape has been the result of increasingly sophisticated archaeological and topographical studies of Byzantine rural sites, and, in particular, the growing influence of what might be termed ‘landscape studies’ on our understanding of the Byzantine countryside.

Fortunately, British archaeologists and Byzantinists are in a strong position when it comes to the application of techniques derived from landscape studies, for nowhere else are landscape studies as advanced or sophisticated as they are with respect to the history of Britain in general, and of England in particular. Through the inspirational work of W.G. Hoskins in the 1950s, the tradition of English local history that Hoskins helped to foster, and the accumulated efforts of local history and antiquarian societies, we know more about the continuous history and development of the English countryside from the pre-Roman period to the present day than we probably do about any other landscape.<sup>11</sup> The most important point to emerge from such studies is how remarkably embedded and continuous that history is. As Hoskins put it, ‘everything in the landscape is older than we think’, and the closer one looks at the English countryside, the more true that statement appears to be.<sup>12</sup> It has been noted, for example, that one of

the most basic building blocks of landholding in early medieval Britain, what, in the Anglo-Saxon sources, is described as the ‘hide’, appears to have been common to the British Isles and Ireland as a whole – indicating a pre-Roman origin to the institution.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, alongside many a Roman villa have been found dispersed settlements of the hamlet type that, again, appear to have predated the arrival of the villa economy, and which would remain embedded topographically and socially long after the villa had gone – with some such settlements in Cornwall and elsewhere still visible within living memory.<sup>14</sup>

This evidence for deep, structural continuity in certain of the key building blocks of English rural society chimes very closely with the evidence that has recently been amassed, and especially with the arguments that have recently been advanced, by the Belgian team with respect to late antique Sagalassos and the transitional period from the seventh to the eleventh centuries.<sup>15</sup> The Belgian-led excavations and surveys have revealed that from around the late sixth century, the urban settlement around Sagalassos began to decline and also that the middle Byzantine territory of the late antique city witnessed a shift from arable farming and olive cultivation to stock-raising and mixed farming: a pattern that, as indicated earlier, is common across much of central and eastern Anatolia at this time. However, the palaeoecological record is increasingly indicating that, for Sagalassos, the change discernible in the agrarian economy was primarily one of emphasis, with olive pollen, for example, occurring ‘in more restricted amounts than before, but [still in quantities] high enough to suggest ongoing [olive] cultivation’, and with the team able to identify ‘possible indications for intensive farming’ into the middle Byzantine period.<sup>16</sup> It is only after c.1000, they argue, that the increased impact of pastoralism becomes most apparent, perhaps indicating the military, economic and cultural impact of the Seljuk advance (as well, possibly, as reflecting agricultural responses to fluctuating climatic conditions).

Such change as really took place from late antiquity to the eleventh century, the Sagalassos team have recently argued, was primarily limited to the apex of the settlement hierarchy and to the level of elites: it was change

in terms of the decline of an urban landscape that, as Stephen Mitchell has emphasized, had effectively been imposed on much of Anatolia by elite culture and imperial *fiat*. The demise of late antique urbanism left the core structures of Anatolian village society substantially intact. This was a world, in the Belgian team's words, in which 'nothing much changed after the seventh century AD. Life continued as it was, centred on villages, hamlets and farms, but they functioned in a decapitated landscape'.<sup>17</sup> Just as Marc Bloch argued that post-Roman society in the west essentially reverted to an 'iron age norm', so too, the Belgian team would seem to argue, did the post-Justinianic territory of Sagalassos.<sup>18</sup>

Such findings certainly help the social and economic historian of the Byzantine countryside to keep questions of change in proportion, and remind us that there is more to Byzantine economic history than simply the history of urbanism and the history of elites. But the example of English landscape studies should also alert us to the fact that the historical significance of such continuity needs to be handled with caution. As the English evidence demonstrates, it is possible for key building blocks of the rural economy and of the rural landscape to remain substantially intact or seemingly unaffected, in the context of a society in which a great deal of agrarian change was actually taking place. Such change, however, may be archaeologically and topographically invisible.

This fact emerges very clearly, for example, with respect to the history of the lower Maeander valley in western Asia Minor, as recently studied by Peter Thonemann. Thonemann's study of the epigraphy reveals how – during the Hellenistic period – what he terms an 'agrarian revolution' transformed patterns of landownership in the Maeander valley, with what were initially independently held landholdings (*klēroi*) being progressively bought up and incorporated into large estates. Yet, in Thonemann's words, 'the encratination of the new landowning class seems to have had no archaeologically visible effect on rural settlement'.<sup>19</sup>

The reasons for this become apparent if we turn to the epigraphic record for the same region during a later era of estate expansion, namely the early fourth century CE. A high degree of concentration of landed wealth is

immediately evident from the early fourth-century inscriptions; but so too is the highly fragmented structure of such property portfolios as are recorded. ‘Great estates’ there clearly were, but those estates were not, for the most part, great latifundial enterprises; rather, they were conglomerations of individual and often widely dispersed *chôria* and their associated landholdings. So, for example, we have details of the vast estate of a certain Tatianus, comprising some 1,400 acres. But that estate, it appears, was made up of some fourteen different properties, including self-sufficient farms (*agroi*), villages (*chôria*) owned outright by the estate, and individual plots of land held in the vicinity of other villages.<sup>20</sup> The individual building blocks of *agroi* and *chôria* are likely to have possessed a topographical logic of their own, possibly reaching back to the Hellenistic past or earlier. Importantly, that internal topographical logic meant that they could also look forward to a Byzantine future, as the highly fragmented estate structure we encounter with respect to the estate of Tatianus in the early fourth century is replicated for the same area in the eleventh century, on the similarly extensive estates of Andronikos Doukas (recorded in the archive of the monastery of St John on Patmos), which he received by way of gift from the emperor Michael VII in 1073. Again, the estate appears to have consisted of a network of villages and widely scattered landholdings, some of which bore demonstrably ancient toponyms which Thonemann has been able to trace on the ground, thereby confirming an intuition of the late Michael Hendy.<sup>21</sup>

This evidence for western Asia Minor from the Hellenistic period through to the early years of the Seljuk advance should serve as a major warning for those tempted to invoke the timelessness of Anatolian village society on the basis of the archaeology or topography alone. The nucleated village or *chôrion* may indeed have been a key element of continuity throughout Byzantine Anatolia and Asia Minor, but the social character of the village could alter radically according to who owned it. Such villages could be independent (as those around Sagalassos may have come to be), or could form a constituent part of a dispersed estate (as those studied by Thonemann clearly were). Topography alone, in short, reveals little of the social history of the landscape. But topography, archaeology and texts taken together may

reveal much; above all, they may reveal much of a degree and type of continuity very different from that teased out by the Sagalassos team.

If one of the key lessons we should learn from Hoskins is the extraordinary antiquity of much that is to be found in the landscape, the other is that every landscape must be understood in its own terms, to see what it can tell us specifically about its own history. This is especially important to bear in mind when thinking about the Byzantine landscape during the seventh to eleventh centuries. This is because, as noted earlier, one of the key determinants that shaped the evolution of the middle Byzantine economy and society was warfare, and no two regions experienced the same military history.

Whether one is talking about the urban or rural landscape, the disruption caused by warfare in the seventh and eighth centuries was clearly far less pronounced, for example, in Paphlagonia, Bithynia, around the Sea of Marmora, and along parts of the coastal zone of western Asia Minor than it was in the emergent frontier zones of Cappadocia, Armenia, Cilicia and Isauria. In the western, coastal zones there is very unlikely to have been anything like the near total breakdown of agrarian structures we see further east. As a result, what we end up with by the time military conditions began to stabilize once more, from around the middle of the eighth century, is a startlingly fractured and diversified Byzantine landscape. Warfare and administrative reorganization necessarily meant that many urban centres had contracted. The same factors, however, could induce other urban centres to grow. Recent work at Amorium, on the land approaches to Constantinople in western Asia Minor, for example, reveals the settlement to have expanded in the seventh and eighth centuries as it became the headquarters of the *stratēgos* of the ‘Anatolikon theme’; similarly, surveys elsewhere in western Asia Minor are now starting to reveal a considerably higher degree of urban continuity than was apparent to Foss in the 1970s.<sup>22</sup> A monetary economy also hung on in these areas: new coinage might have been relatively rare, but old stocks of coin continued to circulate and remained legal tender (as the *Basilica* makes clear).<sup>23</sup> The greater resilience of cities and of monetary conditions in these regions would have been

conducive to comparatively high levels of continuity in agrarian relations of production, rural social structures and networks of exchange.

As I have argued elsewhere, in the highly fractured world of Byzantium in the eighth century, regions, sub-regions, and communities are thus likely to have found themselves in radically contrasting situations, even when in quite close geographical proximity to one another.<sup>24</sup> For example, in war-torn parts of the Anatolian plateau where (as Stephen Mitchell has noted) arable agriculture and cereal production had hitherto flourished, pastoralism was now clearly the order of the day, and tribes of transhumant pastoralists may have traversed a landscape now devoid of the haughty Cappadocian *dynatoi* of whom Justinian had complained.<sup>25</sup> Yet in other parts of Anatolia – probably, indeed, the same parts – communities clustered around the protective embrace of indigenous, Caucasian or Armenian warlords, in circumstances more akin to those described by Marc Bloch for the tenth-century west.<sup>26</sup> This is the situation that would produce the rancher lords of the ninth and tenth centuries and the great marcher clans of the Skleroi and the Phokades who would come to dominate middle Byzantine politics.<sup>27</sup> Away from the warzone, however, one might have been more likely to encounter independent peasant producers of the sort described in certain passages of the *Farmers' Law*: peasants living in communities which, nevertheless, as described even in that document, were already characterized by a high degree of internal social differentiation and stratification, with the text alluding to wage-labourers, sharecroppers and even slaves operating alongside free peasant producers.<sup>28</sup> This source may be taken to reflect conditions in the socially relatively decapitated world revealed by the Sagalassos survey.

Perhaps most significantly, existing cheek-by-jowl alongside such peasants were surviving estates owned by the Crown, the Church, and members of the imperial aristocracy – increasingly a new palatine aristocracy which had, by the late eighth century, largely assimilated members of the old Constantinopolitan senatorial lineages.<sup>29</sup> These palatine aristocrats would eventually build up trans-regional property portfolios of their own, such as we find alluded to in the tenth and eleventh centuries in

the letters of Nicephoros Ouranos.<sup>30</sup> But for the eighth and ninth centuries one should note, for instance, the extensive and slave-rich estates inherited by St Philaretos (d. 792) in Paphlagonia; the similarly slave-rich estates in Bithynia of Theophanes Confessor (d. 818); and the estates on the Bosphorus of the well-connected mandarin family of the patriarch Tarasios (d. 806).<sup>31</sup> In these core territories of the middle Byzantine state in western Asia Minor one is likely to have encountered a very high degree of continuity in terms of agrarian relations of production, bolstered by the institutional memory of the Church and the Crown, each of which remained great landowners in their own right. Here, it is likely to have been institutional and aristocratic dominance – not autonomous peasant communities – that constituted the historical norm, with much of the sophisticated economic infrastructure of late antiquity surviving into the Byzantine Middle Ages substantially intact.

This sense is strongly conveyed by a number of our written sources. At the level of legal and economic institutions, for example, the category of tied agricultural labourers, bound to reside on the estate of their landowning employer, was a constant of the Byzantine legal tradition, one which survived across the *caesura* of the seventh century. The *enapographoi georgoi* of the Justinianic legislation were still there in the laws of the tenth century as *enapographoi paroikoi*, and were frequently described in the middle Byzantine sources, as in the earlier ones, as *misthotoi* – ‘wage labourers’: this suggests the survival of traditions of direct management on estates, perhaps focused on a centrally administered estate demesne sometimes described in both the Justinianic and middle Byzantine sources as the *autourgia*.<sup>32</sup> At a regional level, the Bithynian landscape that we know was home to the estates of the family of Theophanes Confessor in the eighth century (and where, in the eleventh century, Michael Psellos would acquire monastic properties) was already home to dense networks of estates in the fourth century. It was here, for example, that Flavius Ablabius acquired estates in the 330s.<sup>33</sup>

Crucially, the impression of continuity derived from the literary sources (such as the *Life of Theophanes Confessor* or the *Letters* of Michael Psellos) is increasingly being confirmed by archaeological and landscape studies. So,

for example, the findings edited by Geyer and Lefort have revealed a striking continuity of settlement in Bithynia between the sixth and eleventh centuries, with the network of villages and small towns becoming denser over the course of the period, and with settlements of possibly Roman origin surviving down to the sixteenth century, when they were still identifiable at the heart of administrative units.<sup>34</sup> Although a fortification of the landscape is predictably visible from the eleventh century onwards, the indications of continuity are clear. Crucially, such continuity is evident not only with respect to patterns of settlement, but also patterns of land use, with both palaeoecological and documentary evidence each pointing to continued emphasis on cereal production, viticulture and olive cultivation (bolstered by the need to provide for the markets of Constantinople). Ancient agricultural regimes, in short, survived intact.<sup>35</sup> The numismatic evidence also points to a high degree of continuity in monetary structures, which again would have facilitated a survival of older networks and forms of exchange.

Similar evidence for a continuity of land use and economic infrastructure emerges from the Thracian hinterland of Constantinople. As Paul Magdalino has noted, for the years 1198 and 1204 we have details of landholdings (*episkepseis*) in Thrace and Thessaly which comprised what were clearly ‘very ancient imperial domains’.<sup>36</sup> Of the two largest blocks of such properties, one (the *episkepsis* of Tzouroulon in Thrace) had been the seat of a *kourator* in the ninth century, while the ‘the town of Pherai, in the rich farmland of eastern Thessaly, had been an imperial domain in the time of Augustus’.<sup>37</sup> For the same Thracian hinterland of Constantinople, Jim Crow and Sam Turner have recently identified a system of strip fields that may have ‘medieval or possibly even classical origins’.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, in the lower Maeander valley, as we have already seen, the evidence of the fourth-century epigraphy with respect to the scale and structure of estates, chimes very closely with the documentary evidence for the eleventh century. Here, as in Thrace, not only the forms of land use, but also the social character of landownership would appear to have been broadly similar in both the late antique and middle Byzantine periods.

On the basis of such evidence, therefore, there is good reason to believe that many of the estates recorded in Bithynia, Thrace, or western Asia Minor in the eleventh century may well have been late antique survivals, preserved by those two great agents of institutional continuity in Byzantium: the Church and the state. In particular, as I have argued elsewhere, a high degree of social and economic continuity on the ground was facilitated by the way in which the Byzantine state acted across the centuries (in Paul Magdalino's words) as a sort of 'clearing house' for landed properties, granting entire functioning estates to favourites while confiscating them from those who had fallen from grace. This would have allowed existing estates to have been transmitted and circulated in ownership substantially intact, in spite of considerable discontinuity in the composition of landowning elites themselves.<sup>39</sup> It is important to reiterate that the policy of issuing grants of land to favoured agents of the imperial government was in no sense a Comnenian innovation: it is referred to in the tenth century, for example, in both imperial legislation and the documentary sources, and was already present as early as the middle of the fourth century, when we are told by Libanius that a certain *praeses* Heliodorus was granted great wealth in the form of land and slaves by way of wage (*misthos*).<sup>40</sup>

Until the Seljuk advance of the late eleventh century, therefore, in the core territories of the middle Byzantine empire, landowners came and went, but estates remained the same.<sup>41</sup> There is significant evidence for deep-rooted continuity not only in patterns of land use, but also in the social character of landownership and in the core agrarian relations of production which ultimately determined social structures in the Byzantine countryside. In eleventh-century Byzantium, as in the England of W.G. Hoskins, everything in the landscape, it would seem, was indeed older than we think.

## Notes

- [1](#) M. Cassis, ‘Çadir Höyük: A Rural Settlement in Byzantine Anatolia’, in T. Vorderstrasse and J. Roodenberg (eds), *Archaeology of the Countryside in Medieval Anatolia* (Leiden, 2009), 1–24.
- [2](#) Cited *ibid.*, 11.
- [3](#) W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955), 17.
- [4](#) Cassis, ‘Çadir Höyük’, 2.
- [5](#) *Ibid.*, 2.
- [6](#) *Ibid.*, 3.
- [7](#) M. Mullett ‘Byzantium: A Friendly Society?’, *Past and Present* 118 (1988), 3–24.
- [8](#) Cassis, ‘Çadir Höyük’, 5–6.
- [9](#) W.J. Eastwood et al., ‘Integrating Palaeoecological and Archaeo-Historical Records: Land Use and Landscape Change in Central Cappadocia (Central Turkey) since Late Antiquity’, in T. Vorderstrasse and J. Roodenberg (eds), *Archaeology of the Countryside*, 45–70.
- [10](#) P. Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2011), 262.
- [11](#) Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*. For the geographical expansion of the approach, see A.T. Grove and O. Rackham, *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe: An Ecological History* (New Haven, CT, 2011).
- [12](#) Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 12.
- [13](#) T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Kinship, Status, and the Origins of the Hide’, *Past and Present* 56 (1972), 3–33.
- [14](#) Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 20–32.
- [15](#) H. Vanheverbeke, A.K. Vionis, J. Poblome and M. Walkens, ‘What Happened After the 7th Century AD? A Different Perspective on Post-Roman Rural Anatolia’, in T. Vorderstrasse and J. Roodenberg (eds), *Archaeology of the Countryside*, 177–90.
- [16](#) *Ibid.*, 183.
- [17](#) *Ibid.*, 177; S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1993), vol. I, 80–100.

- 18 M. Bloch, ‘The Rise of Dependent Cultivation and Seignorial Institutions’, in M.M. Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, vol. I. The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1966), 235–90, esp. 272–83.
- 19 Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley*, 242–51.
- 20 Ibid., 252–9.
- 21 Ibid., 259–70.
- 22 C.S. Lightfoot, ‘Excavations at Amorium: Results from the Last Ten Years (1998–2008)’, in T. Vorderstrasse and J. Roodenberg (eds), *Archaeology of the Countryside*, 139–53; P. Niewöhner, ‘Archäologie und die dunklen Jahrhunderte in byzantinischen Anatolien’ in J. Henning (ed.), *Post-Roman Towns*, 2 vols (Berlin, 2007), vol. II, 119–57, modifying C. Foss, ‘The Persians in Asia Minor at the End of Antiquity’, *English Historical Review* 90 (1975), 721–47.
- 23 *Basilica* IV, 18.1. See also C.S. Lightfoot, ‘Byzantine Anatolia: Reassessing the Numismatic Evidence’, *Revue Numismatique* 158 (2002), 229–39 and C. Morrison, ‘Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation’, in A. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2002), 909–66.
- 24 P. Sarris, ‘Large Estates and the Peasantry in Byzantium c.600–1100’, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire* 90 (2012), 429–50.
- 25 Mitchell, *Anatolia*, vol. I, 144–7 and vol. II, 131; *J. Nov.* 30.
- 26 M. Bloch, *La société féodale* (Paris, 1949).
- 27 J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestation à Byzance* (Paris, 1990).
- 28 *Georgikos Nomos* (ed. E. Lipshits and I. Medvedev, Leningrad, 1984), passages 1 (97); 9–10 (100); 13–14 (101–2); 34 (110); and 45–7 (114).
- 29 J. Haldon, ‘The Fate of the Late Roman Senatorial Elite’, in J. Haldon and L. Conrad (eds), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East VI: Elites Old and New* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), 290–325. For estates owned by the Church, see C. Mango (ed.), *The Correspondence of Ignatios the Deacon* (Washington, DC, 1997), 29: letter 1.
- 30 See discussion in M. Whittow, ‘How the East was Lost: The Background to the Komnenian Reconquests’, in M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds), *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast, 1996), 55–67.

[31](#) L. Ryden (ed.), *The Life of Philaretos the Merciful* (Uppsala, 2002), 61 (§1); Methodios, *Life of Theophanes*, ed. V.V. Latyshev, *Zapiski Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk po istoricheskому-filologicheskому otdeleniyu*, 8th series, 13 (1918), 1–40, at 4–5 and 21–22 (§4); St Efthymiadis (ed.), *Ignatios the Deacon, Life of Tarasios* (Aldershot, 1998), 98–9 (§24). See discussion in C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2005), 234–5.

[32](#) Sarris, ‘Large Estates’, 442–6.

[33](#) Synesius *Ep.* 61; Psellos *Ep.* V, 29.

[34](#) B. Geyer and J. Lefort, ‘L’évolution de l’occupation du sol et du paysage’, in B. Geyer and J. Lefort (eds.), *La Bithynie au moyen âge* (Paris, 2003), 534–45.

[35](#) This is argued for with respect to the western zone as a whole in the very important work by A. Izdebski, *A Rural World in Transition: Asia Minor from Late Antiquity into the Early Middle Ages* (Berlin, 2012). I am grateful to Dr Izdebski for making his study available to me prior to publication and after the Oxford symposium.

[36](#) P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 168.

[37](#) Ibid., 168, n. 238.

[38](#) J. Crow and S. Turner, ‘Silivri and the Thracian Hinterland of Istanbul: An Historical Landscape’, *Anatolian Studies* 59 (2009), 167–81.

[39](#) Sarris, ‘Large Estates’, and Magdalino, *Manuel I Komnenos*, 168.

[40](#) N. Svoronos, *Les nouvelles des empereurs Macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens, 1994) 162–73: 9.1.2; J. Lefort et al. (eds), *Actes d’Iviron*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1985) 163–72: no. 10. Libanius, *Or.* 62. See also Procopius, *Wars* 2.3.1–2.

[41](#) Major changes would result not only from warfare, but also from the Comnenian recasting of the fiscal state in response to the political conditions resultant from the Seljuk advance, for which see Sarris (2012).

## Aristakēs Lastivertc‘i and Armenian Urban Consciousness

*Tim Greenwood*

Eleventh-century Armenia is usually studied in terms of three wider historical processes: first, the eastwards expansion of Byzantium, a process already under way in the tenth century; second, the advent of Turkic raiders across the Caucasus on a frequent basis in the years after 1047, to devastating effect; and third, the emergence of a patchwork of Armenian lordships, some ephemeral, others more persistent, to the west and south of historic Armenia in the aftermath of the battle of Manzikert in 1071.<sup>1</sup> These are not solely the contentions of modern scholars. One Armenian historian of the early twelfth century, Matthew of Edessa, certainly believed that the Byzantine annexation of territory and its corollary, the displacement of the Armenian nobility from their hereditary districts, had contributed directly to Seljuk success. Matthew reserves some trenchant criticism for the ‘Romans’ who had destroyed the Armenian kingdom, described as a ‘protective wall’, and removed all the Armenian princes and commanders from the east, forcing them to settle among the Greeks. Matthew observes sourly that they were replaced with eunuch commanders instead, whose effeminacy and softness had brought about the subjugation of the faithful at the hands of the Turks.<sup>2</sup> Looking back from his vantage point in the late 1120s, Matthew had no hesitation in blaming Byzantium for the disasters of the past. It is worth

remembering, however, that Matthew's hostility towards Byzantium was conditioned by contemporary political and ecclesiastical antagonism.<sup>3</sup> His historical survey was inevitably shaped, whether consciously or otherwise, by his own views and preconceptions. His *History* may offer a dramatic sweep of eleventh-century affairs but it does so from a twelfth-century perspective.

This unhappy narrative for the eleventh century, of political capitulation, territorial concession and widespread devastation, sits very uneasily with the conventions of Armenian historiography. The Armenian past is imagined by medieval writers and modern commentators alike in terms of political and religious independence; tenacious and costly resistance to external threats which were ultimately overcome; and a distinctive and defiant cultural legacy, expressed in ecclesiological, linguistic and architectural terms. This powerful impression of the past has been projected as the shared experience of all Armenians by Armenian writers from the fifth century onwards and has proved to be particularly resilient to change or re-imagination. Eleventh-century Armenia has never fitted into this dominant national narrative and consequently has attracted little in the way of scholarly attention, at least on its own terms. Instead it has been viewed as an era of profound loss, one which witnessed the end of political independence across the districts of historic Armenia, material destruction and mass emigration. Only with the restoration of an independent Armenian kingdom in Cilicia in 1198 does scholarly interest pick up once again although much of the previous century is often treated as merely the prologue to this inevitable political revival.<sup>4</sup> Eleventh-century Armenia has been left in between periods.

This is not the place for setting out a range of new approaches and lines of enquiry that could be applied to the study of Armenia in this period. What follows, however, is an attempt to explore one dimension of eleventh-century Armenian society that has not, to my knowledge, been considered previously, and that is the development of urban consciousness. By this, I mean more than a historical or archaeological survey of cities or towns in eleventh-century Armenia, although such research could yield valuable

results.<sup>5</sup> Urban consciousness requires a clear sense of group identity, of collective responsibility which could be expressed in action, of community and relationship based upon living or working in a city as opposed to a village or district. Studying the emergence of urban consciousness requires us to move outside the traditional narrative of eleventh-century Armenia, characterized by despondency, destruction and dislocation, and consider the extent to which Armenian society was being transformed in this era. Arguably the social landscape of eleventh-century Armenia was radically different from that of the tenth or twelfth centuries. The displacement of the dominant lay and clerical elite following the Byzantine annexation of swathes of western and central Armenia was accompanied by the emergence of new forms of social organization and expression, centred on urban communities.

It has become something of a convention to sharply differentiate town and country across medieval Armenia. In a famous article, Professor Nina Garsoïan maintained that

Armenian cities were by their very concept and institutions incompatible with, or at best peripheral to, Armenia's essentially aristocratic society, devoid of any tradition of municipal or republican institutions ... and linked fundamentally with Iran, where the city also remained outside the power elite.<sup>6</sup>

Garsoïan's article was focused on pre-Islamic Armenia but she did make several forays into tenth- and eleventh-century urban history, noting the apparent reluctance of kings and princes, patriarchs and monks, to live in cities: 'No important group of city-dwellers can be identified within the ruling class until the end of the Middle Ages'.<sup>7</sup> The corollary of this line of argument appears in the article's title: 'The Early-Mediaeval Armenian City: An Alien Element?' There were cities in Armenia but they were not founded by Armenians, they were not inhabited by Armenians – or at least Armenians who mattered – and they were not exploited or developed by Armenians.

Garsoïan and others are right to point out that many of these settlements were not Armenian foundations, in the sense that Armenian kings and

princes inspired their creation and invested in their construction. Most have Hellenistic, Persian or Arab origins.<sup>8</sup> They may initially have had significant non-Armenian populations, comprising Greek colonists or Persian or Arab garrisons and administrators, but unless one accepts a model of continuous immigration into these cities from outside Armenia, it seems inevitable that these urban centres eventually became ‘Armenian’, in the sense of having substantial Armenian populations. It is true to say that before the end of the ninth century, many of the urban centres in Armenia were located in various local Arab emirates – Dvin, Naxčavan, Theodosiopolis/Qālīqalā and Manzikert, together with the string of cities along the north shore of lake Van – rather than on lands controlled by the Armenian elite, but this has more to do with the historic control by the dominant powers of the major communication routes through Armenia on which the cities were located, rather than any disdain for urban life or living on the part of the Armenian elite. These corridors were strategically significant, providing access into the Anatolian and Iranian plateaux, and were controlled by fortresses, some of which were established as, or grew into, urban centres. Although the Armenian elite seem to have been excluded from them, their enthusiasm for urban life should not be underestimated.

To this end, it is striking that the earliest Armenian visual representation of an urban community appears on the west flank of the southern façade of the Church of the Holy Cross at Ałt'amar, commissioned by Gagik Arcruni at the start of the tenth century.<sup>9</sup> It is a relief of the familiar Old Testament narrative of Jonah and the whale ([Figure 7.1](#)).<sup>10</sup> This relief has attracted some attention because of its depiction of the whale as an Iranian *senmurv* but it is the four figures in the roundels to the right of the seated king of Nineveh who are relevant for this study because they represent the citizens of the city reacting to Jonah’s message of destruction if they did not turn from their evil ways. The citizens play a role in the biblical narrative but it is hardly a major one. Their inclusion in the relief therefore represents a deliberate choice within the artistic programme. Given the relationship between the figures and the seated king, their presence seems to be saying something about the ideal context in which a king is to be imagined – namely an urban

context. Nor is this the only expression of this, for the first continuator of the early tenth-century Armenian historian T'ovma Arcruni who described Gagik's church and palace on the island of Alt'amar sets them in a decidedly urban context, with golden streets and elaborate buildings.<sup>11</sup> This is a complete fiction, as anyone who has visited the island and seen its size and predominantly rocky character would acknowledge. This passage tells us more about how Gagik wished to be represented as a ruler, and that required an urban landscape. Therefore, even if Garsoian is right about the exclusion of the Armenian elite from cities in earlier centuries, it seems that by the start of the tenth century, the ideal context for an Arcruni king was an urban environment. Without going into detail, Bagratuni kings from the middle of the tenth century onwards realized that ideal, residing in the rapidly expanding city of Ani, an expansion which can be traced through the double extension of its circuit walls, once in the 950s and again in the 980s.<sup>12</sup> Whether this expansion was motivated by security or by the desire to define the limits of the city for legal and/or fiscal reasons is not clear. But while these examples of Arcruni Alt'amar and Bagratuni Ani are interesting, they attest very much a top-down approach to Armenian urbanism, that is, articulating the aspirations and attitudes of the princely Armenian elite towards cities and city life. They do not reveal any sense of collective urban consciousness.



[Figure 7.1](#) Jonah addressing the seated king of Nineveh, with the city's inhabitants represented in four roundels, west flank of the southern façade of the church of Alt'amar

How might this be traced? With regret, no archive recording the legislative decisions of a city council has been preserved. Nor is it possible to sketch in any more than the barest of outlines how an Armenian city was governed or administered or policed or taxed in either the tenth or the eleventh century. There are to my knowledge no liturgies that reflect local traditions, practices or cults venerated in an Armenian city, nor is there any description of exactly what happened in a city during a festival or feast day which might attest some sense of civic pride or responsibility. The closest I have found is a general observation implying that major festivals were celebrated in cities by some kind of public spectacle or procession involving different-coloured costumes: 'Because it is a tradition of cities at the Lord's feasts for men and women, old and young, according to their means and capability, to dress up in many costumes, in the likeness of spring flower-gardens.'<sup>13</sup> We have no grants, confirmations or removals of privileges to or on behalf of cities or towns. And we have almost nothing to go on when it comes to studying commercial organizations or business practices in an urban environment in this era.

There is, however, one historical composition which does begin to shed some light on this phenomenon, and from which the above description on religious festivals in urban spaces was derived, and that is the *History* of Aristakēs Lastivertc'i. This composition has not received much in the way of textual study or criticism since Yuzbašyan's edition and partial Russian translation, upon which Canard and Berbérian's French translation was based. In certain respects, Aristakēs fits into the standard profile of medieval Armenian historians. He is identified as a priest and his *History* presents a Christian interpretation of the past and the present:

In accordance with your Creative will, do not let us slip from your hands; may we not be completely tormented by the pagans, those who hate you; for all this, and more than this record of account, came upon us because of our sins.<sup>14</sup>

Aristakēs also sets his composition very deliberately in the context of another Armenian history, that of Step'anos Tarōnec'i, whose work is identified approvingly: ‘And Step'anos Tarōnec'i, who composed with marvellous organization his books of world history, beginning with the first man and completing his history at the death of Gagik’.<sup>15</sup> This direct association with earlier historians comes to be a familiar feature of medieval Armenian historiography after Step'anos Tarōnec'i but can also be found in the opening of the *History* of Łazar P'arpec'i, composed at the end of the fifth century.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, there is much more that is decidedly atypical about the *History* of Aristakēs. The author, if indeed it was him, elected to open his *History* with a dramatic poetic prologue:

Times of affliction have come upon us and terrible troubles have befallen us because the measure of our sin has been filled and our appeal has gone out before God. Every person has polluted his path and the land is full of impiety. Righteousness has diminished and debauchery has increased. Layman and priest have lied before God and consequently foreign peoples have expelled us from our dwelling.<sup>17</sup>

This general lament, which is incomplete, is followed by twenty-five chapters covering the period between the years 1000 and 1072; in the context of Armenian historiography this is a narrow time frame. The work was written after 1072 because its final notice refers to the death of the sultan Alp Arslan.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand it seems very likely that it was completed before 1087 because when referring to the capture of Edessa in 1031 by the Romans, the passage notes ‘And from that day to this, the city has submitted to the control of the Romans’; Edessa fell to the Seljuks in 1087.<sup>19</sup> With the exception of Step'anos Tarōnec'i, whose composition was finally completed in 1004/5, Aristakēs’ *History* is the only extant Armenian historical compilation of the eleventh century. Unlike Matthew of Edessa, therefore, Aristakēs lived through the dramatic and bewildering events of the middle of the eleventh century, and while it would be wrong to treat his account as a simple narrative of events, it will not have been reshaped by later concerns and attitudes.

Two particular features of the composition merit comment. Firstly it is clear that Aristakēs drew upon a recent work of Byzantine imperial history when compiling his work. This supplied both the chronological and the narrative framework around which the rest of the composition was arranged. The influence of this source can be seen from the first sentence which reports the progress of Basil II through western Armenia ‘in the twenty-fifth year of his reign’ following the death of the *curopalates* David of Tayk<sup>c</sup>. Thereafter the text explores the origins, characters and actions of successive emperors and while many of these passages have a broadly ‘eastern’ dimension, there are important exceptions. Thus we learn that at his accession, Michael IV ‘made one of his brothers *magistros* and gave Tēsalonik [Thessalonica] into his control and entrusted to him responsibility for the Bulgarians and the regions of the west.’<sup>20</sup> Or again, there is a description of the rebellion and death of George Maniakes at the start of the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos in 1041.<sup>21</sup> Such incidental details do not advance our understanding of events in eleventh-century Armenia but they do reveal the nature of the underlying source consulted and exploited by Aristakēs. This was a composition, originally in Greek, which traced imperial history; that eight of the twenty-five sections carry headings that refer to either the reign or the death of an emperor attests its prominence. This work of imperial history, however, seems to have concluded in 1057, a date which by coincidence matches the end of Skylitzes’ *Synopsis Historion*. The final notice of the *Synopsis* reports the retirement of Michael VI Stratiotikos to his house, on ‘the fourth day, the thirty-first of the month of August, the tenth induction’, and the coronation of Isaac Komnenos the day after.<sup>22</sup> Aristakēs offers a short account of Michael’s downfall ‘in the tenth Roman induction’ and the accession of Isaac Komnenos, but his reign is not otherwise discussed.<sup>23</sup> Constantine X Doukas does not feature at all and a Byzantine focus only re-emerges at the end of the work, with the 1071 campaign of Romanos IV Diogenes.<sup>24</sup> The gap between 1057 and 1071 is filled with one narrative recording the fall of Ani in 1064 and two chapters reporting outbreaks of heresy, one in the district of Hark<sup>c</sup>, which appears to date from the start of the eleventh century, and a second in Mananali and

Ekeleac<sup>c</sup>, from an unknown date in the eleventh century.<sup>25</sup> These two chapters sit uncomfortably within the narrative at this point but they do fit thematically with the wider purposes of the composition, attesting the presence of heterodox beliefs and practices within Armenia and thus justifying God's anger against his people.

Perhaps the key point to note however is that Aristakēs' access to, and use of, a work of contemporary Byzantine history is not without precedent. Step'anos Tarōnec'i exploited just such a work in book III of his *Universal Chronicle* and used it in much the same way, as a chronological spine for his coverage of tenth-century history. From book III.6, short notices of Byzantine imperial history are tacked on to the ends of the chapters which otherwise concentrate on Armenian affairs.<sup>26</sup> From III.10 onwards, the chapters open with Byzantine history and it is now the Armenian notices that are appended.<sup>27</sup> Nor was Step'anos Tarōnec'i's *Universal History* the only recent work of Armenian historiography to fuse Roman and Armenian history. Book I of the *History* of Uxtanēs of Sebasteia, a work which was composed in the 980s, and in any event by 989/90, reflects a similar interest, albeit one that is expressed through a study of the classical era. It comprises a summary of world history from Adam to Constantine the Great, which was derived from a late seventh-century Armenian work of universal history and chronology, known as the *Anonymous Chronicle*, itself based ultimately on heavily redacted excerpts from Eusebius' *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History*. Uxtanēs interleaved extracts from this work, recording imperial Roman history from Julius Caesar to Constantine, with passages recording episodes of Armenian history lifted from the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac'i.<sup>28</sup> Unlike Step'anos and Aristakēs therefore, Uxtanēs was able to compile his study from underlying sources in Armenian; he did not exploit, or need to exploit, a work of Byzantine history. But all three authors attest an interest in Roman or Byzantine history and situate Armenian history in that context. Moreover all three authors are associated with western regions of Armenia firmly under Byzantine control at the time of composition: Sebasteia (always Byzantine but apparently subject to Armenian immigration from the middle of the tenth century), Tarōn

(annexed in 966/7) and Lastivert, a village close to Theodosiopolis (captured in 949 but permanently annexed in 1000 after the death of David of Tayk<sup>c</sup>).<sup>29</sup> In his long description of the city of Arcn, just outside Theodosiopolis, Aristakēs states categorically that ‘this city of ours,’ *k<sup>c</sup>ałak<sup>c</sup>s mer*, shone like a valuable jewel and later on muses ‘who can put in writing the terrible and intolerable wrongs of this city of ours,’ *zk<sup>c</sup>ałak<sup>c</sup>is meroy* (78.1–2).<sup>30</sup> While the Byzantine advance eastwards has usually been studied in terms of territorial annexation, these three historical works indicate that the transmission of Byzantine political and literary culture was no less significant, informing how both the remote and the recent Armenian past was conceptualized.<sup>31</sup>

It is, however, the second feature of Aristakēs’ *History* that brings us back to the issue of urban consciousness. His descriptions of the Turkic raids into Armenia are imagined and represented principally in terms of their impact on particular urban centres: Arcn, Kars, the towns of Mesopotamia, Melitene and Ani.<sup>32</sup> The narratives take the form of individual laments, reporting not only the grim litany of torments suffered by the inhabitants during the sack of their city but also exploring why God had allowed them to suffer in this way. For Aristakēs, the only possible explanation was the collective sinfulness of the population itself. Unlike Matthew of Edessa, therefore, Aristakēs did not seek to transfer responsibility to Byzantium; these self-contained narratives look for internal reasons and find them in the conduct of the cities’ inhabitants. The following extract describes how the city of Arcn became corrupted and forms the prelude to a long account of the destruction of the city:

Such a city, famous and illustrious in all countries ... crowned with an abundance of good things ... like a newly-married woman, in beauty of form and brilliance of adornment, desirable to all. For its leaders [*išxank<sup>c</sup>*] were philanthropic [*mardasērk<sup>c</sup>*], its judges [*datawork<sup>c</sup>*] just and intolerant of bribes, its merchants [*vačar akank<sup>c</sup>*] founders and adorners of churches who gave repose to monks and were charitable and generous to the poor. There was no dishonesty in business and no fraud in commercial exchanges. Profiting from usury and exorbitant interest was a matter of slander ... everyone rivalled one another only in piety. ... Its priests were celebrated and prayer-loving, compliant and attentive in church service. Therefore its merchants were celebrated and its agents [*ar gnōtk<sup>c</sup>*] kings of the peoples. And this city of ours shone like a valuable jewel, with luminous brilliance among all cities. ... But rightful religion was turned into impiety and a love of money became more precious than a love of God, mammon [*mamonay*]

more [precious] than Christ. Its leaders became like thieves, evildoers and slaves to money. Its judges were corrupted by bribes and did not protect the rights of orphans. Usury and exorbitant interest were established ... and the one who deceived his neighbour boasted that he was wise, saying 'I am powerful'.<sup>33</sup>

Aristakēs examined the conduct of the city's leaders, judges, merchants and priests and suggests that their virtues had become corrupted by a love of money and excess. It is far from clear whether or not this account reflects the actual composition of this city's population, although it certainly reveals how Aristakēs envisaged it. On the other hand, Aristakēs also highlighted merchants as prominent members of the communities of Kars and Melitene, referring to 'honourable and respectable merchants [*vačar · akank<sup>c</sup>*] being cruelly put to death' in Kars and to the merchants [*vačar · akank<sup>c</sup>*] of Melitene as 'the glory of the country and its agents [*ar · gnōlk<sup>c</sup>*] were the kings of the peoples'.<sup>34</sup> Given the absence of specific references to merchants and commerce in all previous Armenian historical compositions – they simply do not feature at all – this coincidence suggests commercial activity in all three cities. The similar phrasing about merchants and agents in the descriptions of both Arcn and Melitene suggests that Aristakēs was responsible for shaping both passages.<sup>35</sup> It is hard not to see the hand of Aristakēs behind this coincidence, shaping these two narratives. It may not be possible to disentangle the relationship between the historical and the literary aspects of these passages.

More important is the editorial decision taken by Aristakēs to represent the raids in these terms, contemplating both the impact of the devastation on the urban populations one by one and trying to understand why they had suffered this fate. This echoes the experience and fate of several cities in the Old Testament – Sodom, Damascus, Tyre, even Jerusalem – and the literary dimension should not be overlooked. But Aristakēs' choice to depict the raids in these terms is so significant because it seems to be reflecting not only the prominence of urban life in eleventh-century Armenia but also a sense of collective identity in cities. In so doing, Aristakēs is taking a very radical step outside conventional Armenian historiography. He is imagining Armenia not in terms of its kings or princely families, nor even in terms of

the Armenian Church, but in terms of its urban communities and their surrounding districts.

This new construction of Armenian social identity needs to be placed in context. The Byzantine expansion eastwards over the previous century had necessarily entailed the displacement of the Armenian princely elite and the episcopal leadership. In the course of the eleventh century, it becomes very difficult to find any bishops of the Armenian Church operating in their historic sees.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Catholicos Grigor II V<sup>k</sup>ayasēr ('Martyrophile') is best-known for wandering through the Middle East collecting and translating martyrologies rather than for his leadership of the Armenian Church suggests that this institution was under intense strain, if not close to complete collapse by this time. In a society and culture whose lay and clerical leadership had been sliced off, cities emerged as key centres of communal identity and local memory.<sup>37</sup> How Aristakēs chose to portray the Seljuk raids is therefore significant for its narrative value, which can be set against other accounts; for its literary and theological skill; but also for its insight into fundamental developments in Armenian society and culture in the middle of the eleventh century.

Can this argument be sustained independently of Aristakēs? There are some features that can be corroborated. Skylitzes for example reports that Artze (that is, Arcn) was a town of many people and much wealth, with many merchants living there, Syrians, Armenians and other nationalities.<sup>38</sup> Its size, its wealth, its commercial character and even its mixed community – these all tally with Aristakēs' impression, for the final comment on the mixed character of the communities seems to be echoed in Aristakēs' observation about the countless number of priests from other countries who had met their end in the sack of the city, in addition to the 150 Armenian priests who had perished.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, Matthew of Edessa wrote in a more conventional mode and tends to concentrate on the efforts of the powerful, the elite, to repel the Seljuks. For example, when commenting on the resistance of the city of Manzikert, Matthew notes that the town was full of Christians who fought courageously, the whole population of the town

fighting together, but swiftly moves on to consider how the Roman commander, Basil son of Apuk'ap, responded to the crisis.<sup>40</sup>

Fortunately there is another body of evidence that supports this notion of Armenian urban community and identity. This comprises a group of eight colophons, extracts from which are set out below in chronological order:

(i) Gospel (988/9 CE)<sup>41</sup>

In Armenian era, in the year 437, this holy Gospel was written by Yovsēp<sup>c</sup>, a humble sinner and unworthy priest, with ignorant mind and contemptible pen. ... I Kirakos, a merchant [*vačarakan*], a sin-serving and unworthy servant, with my close relatives, became desirous of this Gospel because I was very sin-serving personally and I had this holy Gospel of mine written in the *komopolis* [*giwłak' alak'*] of Ačnawan which is called Tětiawor, in the patriarchate of Xacik<sup>c</sup>, catholicos of Armenia, in the kingship of Basil and Constantine, who at their becoming king divided the kingdom of the Greeks into two and many very serious misfortunes, persecutions, and terrors and much turbulence occurred in the country of the Romans, as previously in the past to the Israelites.

(ii) Gospel (1001/2 CE)<sup>42</sup>

Through the grace and infinite mercy of Christ I completed this four-booked fruitful ... Gospel ... priest ... in 450 of this Armenian era, in the patriarchate of Lord Sargis, catholicos of Armenia, in the kingship of David *europalates* and pious king of Virk', in the district of Basean, in this city [*k'alak's*] which is called Ōrdru. ...

(iii) *Maštoc'* (1035/6 CE)<sup>43</sup>

Glory to the all-holy Trinity, who rendered [me] worthy to reach the end of this writing. In 484 of this era, this holy and divinely-narrated *Maštoc'* was written by the hand of the humble and insignificant priest Sargis, in this city of Manadzkert, under the shadow of ...

(iv) Gospel (1042/3 CE)<sup>44</sup>

In the 491st year of the Armenian era, in the seventh month of Navasard, in this city of Ordru, decorated by the hand of the insignificant scribe Sargis, in the name of Sarkavag, the holy priest, son of lord Mesrob, translated to Christ. ...

(v) Gospel (1048/9 CE)<sup>45</sup>

It was written in the great town [*awan*] of Arcn, in the district of Karin, in the patriarchate of Lord Petros, the overseer, and in the episcopacy of Yovhannēs, holy overseer and orthodox leader, and in the kingship of the Romans of Mixayl. David a faithful servant of God became generous in respect of several decorated, illuminated, God-declared ... having encouraged ... to the hope of eternity. ...

(vi) Gospel (1057/8 CE)<sup>46</sup>

these letters [were written] by the hand of T'ovmas, humble priest and least scribe, in this city of Melteni, under the shadow of Saint Grigoris, in this Armenian era five hundred and six, in the office of catholicos of lord Xačik<sup>c</sup>, when he was in the monastery of T'awblur. ...

(vii) Gospel (1066/7 CE)<sup>47</sup>

515 of the number of the Armenian cycle. I Grigor priest, at the weakening of this people of Armenia in the time of our persecution by the people of Ismayel, having been brought up in the regions of the east, in the mountains of Ayrarat, in the village which is called Arkur'i, and followed the pious king of ours, Senek'erim, we dwelt in this city of Sebasteia where the Forty martyrs poured out their blood. ...

(viii) Martyrology of St Eudoxia called Mar'inos and R'omel and Zeno and Makara (1092/3)<sup>48</sup>

The narratives of the holy martyrs were translated from Greek books into Armenian in the Armenian metropolis [*mayrak'ałak' Hayoc'*] which is called Meletini, in Armenian era five hundred and forty-one. ...

The first of these dates from the year 988/9 and the other seven date from the eleventh century. They have been selected on the basis that they were all copied in urban centres in Armenia – in Jerusalem, in Edessa, in Constantinople – these are the earliest to have been produced in urban centres within Armenia. Six of the eight are Gospels, one is a *maštoc'* or liturgy, and the last a collection of martyrologies. The earliest is significant for a number of reasons, for it was commissioned by an anxious merchant – Kirakos, from the *giwlak'ałak'* or *komopolis* of Ačnawan, in other words the *awan* of Ačn, which is a variant of Arcn. Kirakos was clearly very troubled

by his life and his wealth in particular. Elsewhere in the colophon he meditates on the transience of life:

In everything and everywhere time passes, it comes and reaches the present and having passed, once more moves on, but the one who triumphs over affliction triumphs once for all ... the waves of sin caress my ship-wrecked self. ... I corrupted the path of goodness and I demolished the wall of my soul. The darkness of sin blinded me and I was deprived of the right religion, the darkness clouded me and I was plunged into a sea of sin. ... I shall give reply when the questions come, when thoughts are examined at the dreadful tribunal.<sup>49</sup>

This is the first manuscript to be commissioned by a merchant. The other seven are not as forthcoming about their sponsors but there is a second Gospel (v) from the great *awan* of Arcn, dated to the very year of the sack of the city. Of the others, two come from Ordru, situated to the east of Theodosiopolis, two come from Melitene, one is from Manzikert and the last was written in Sebasteia. Of course, this represents just a tiny fraction of what would have been produced; indeed (v), despite its damaged state, implies that David had sponsored several illuminated Gospels. Nevertheless, these colophons attest the presence of Armenian scriptoria in these cities and hence monasteries: ‘under the shadow’ means in the community dedicated to. And there has to have been a relationship between sponsor and scriptorium, thereby connecting two different constituencies within these Armenian urban communities. By way of comparison, when describing the city of Arcn before its demise, Aristakēs refers specifically to the financial support given by merchants for the decoration of churches and the repose of monks.<sup>50</sup> These colophons, and particularly that of Kirakos, illustrate this connection.

A rather different insight comes from the inscription carved onto the western façade of the cathedral church in Ani in about 1060, during the brief period of Byzantine control of the city and shortly before its capture by the Seljuks in 1064:

Through the name of the Almighty Lord and through the mercy of the holy and autocratic king Constantine Duk, it happened for me Bagrat *magistros* and *katepan* of the east Vxkac‘i, to take pity upon this metropolis of Ani. At that time they received the lordships [*tanutērufiwnk‘*] Mxit‘ar *ipatos* son of Kurt and Gregor son of Lapastak *spatarkankitat* and Sargis son of Artavaz *spatarkankitat* and they freed the service of one sixth [*vec‘kēkor*] and the cart [*sayl*] and the

thresher [*kamin*] and *angarion*. And the *katapan*, whoever he is, shall give 600 *mod* [bushels] of grain/seed and the cost of the cavalry; the *tanutērk<sup>c</sup>* shall make the rest from their own house, which is not something heavy for Ani. And for an *Anec<sup>i</sup>* trader, whether by cart or pack-horse, the levy [*bažn*] is free. And an *Anec<sup>i</sup>* who buys skins [*morf elik<sup>c</sup>*] for himself, the levy is free. And an *Anec<sup>i</sup>* carrier/dealer in cotton material [*bambēnc<sup>c</sup>av*] the levy is half free. And they used to give 6 dram per dahekan for the *kapič* now they give 4 and 2 is free. And for the butcher [*msagorci*], whether the head is of cattle or of sheep, he gives half and half is free; and from the property of the seat, 700 dram is free.<sup>51</sup>

That it was carved onto such a prominent structure was surely intended to assert and project the authority of the *katepan* Bagrat Vxkac<sup>i</sup> as much as advertise its content.<sup>52</sup> It is a visual statement of appropriation which would have left a powerful impression on the population of the city passing by on the main thoroughfare. Its secular character subverts the holiness of the site while its use of Armenian rather than Greek implies that it was intended to be read. The inscription has been studied recently by Mahé. A number of features are hard to interpret, including the meaning of *tanutērk<sup>c</sup>*.<sup>53</sup> In previous eras, it had meant head of a family but it seems to possess a different meaning here. Could the three figures have been put in charge of specific quarters of the city, as Mahé suggested? Or could they be heads of commercial associations? Since the number of trades whose exemptions and partial exemptions are detailed in the second half of the inscription is greater than three, it does not look as though they were responsible for one each. Clearly this inscription was intended to advertise a number of changes to the existing duties and levies then in force – these are mostly Armenian in origin but it is striking that they included the *angarion*, the standard term in Greek for labour service. Whatever the responsibilities of the three figures may have been, they were exploiting the resources of Ani to cover the costs of defence and provisioning other than those paid by the *katepan*. But finally there are specific provisions limited to those described as *Anec<sup>i</sup>*, that is those of Ani. How one qualified as an *Anec<sup>i</sup>* is unlikely to be fully resolved; on the other hand the very fact that such a definition is being employed indicates that the term was meaningful and understood. So this inscription has several layers of meaning and significance. For the purposes of this study, its particular value lies in the way in which it imagines the

population as inhabitants of the city rather than in ethnic, confessional or family terms. The population had a collective identity which derived from their residence in the city and which had legal status and meaning. It may not be entirely a coincidence that, in the course of the eleventh century, we begin to find individuals being identified by their city of origin, including David Dunac*i*, that is, of the city of Dvin.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, how is this relevant to eleventh-century Byzantium? Hitherto, Aristakēs has been treated as an Armenian author, and to the extent that he writes in Armenian and contemplates the fates of cities and districts of Armenia at the hands of the Seljuks, that is undeniable. But Aristakēs was apparently born and brought up in a part of Armenia that had been taken over by Byzantium at the start of the eleventh century. He shows a particular concern for the fates of the urban populations of western and central Armenia – of Arcn, Kars, Melitene and Ani – all of which had been under direct Byzantine control in the 1060s before falling to the Seljuks. Does this not make him a witness to provincial life and culture within the Byzantine empire? If so, then Aristakēs needs to be thought of as a Byzantine author quite as much as an Armenian one, making his reflections on urban communities and identities as relevant for the study of eleventh-century Byzantium as for eleventh-century Armenia.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025–1204* (London and New York, 1997), 40–8; N. Garsoian, ‘The Byzantine annexation of the Armenian Kingdoms in the Eleventh Century’, in R. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York, 1997), 1, 187–98; G. Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens entre Grecs, Musulmans et Croisés*, 2 vols (Lisbon, 2003); J.-C. Cheynet and G. Dédéyan, ‘Vocation impériale ou fatalité diasporique: les Arméniens à Byzance (IVe–XIe siècle)’, in G. Dédéyan (ed.), *Histoire du peuple arménien* (Toulouse, 2008), 297–326.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew of Edessa, Žamanakagrut*iwn Mattēosi Ur 'hayec'woy*, ed. M. Melik'-Adamean and N. Ter-Mik'ayelean (Vałarşapat, 1898; repr. with facing modern Armenian translation by H.

Bart'ikyan (Erevan, 1991), 148–50; tr. A.E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades tenth to twelfth centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* (Lanham, MD, 1993), II.13, at 96–7. All the translations from Armenian are my own and may differ from the published English or French translations.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Matthew's deep animosity towards Philaretos – of Armenian origin but loyal to Byzantium and a Chalcedonian – who is called 'an impious and wicked tyrant', 'the eldest son of Satan' and 'the forerunner of the filthy Antichrist': Matthew of Edessa, *Žamanakagrut*iwn**, 222; tr. Dostourian, *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, II.60, at 137; and his presentation of T'oros Rubenid avenging the murder of the last Bagratuni king Gagik II by killing one of the sons of Mandalē: Matthew of Edessa, *Žamanakagrut*iwn**, 346–50; tr. Dostourian, *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, III.53, at 207–9. For a brief but useful discussion, see Z. Pogossian, *The Letter of Love and Concord* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 8–10; for a detailed study of the career of Philaretos, see Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens entre Grecs, Musulmans et Croisés*, I, 5–416.

<sup>4</sup> For the date of the coronation, see P. Halfter, *Das Papsttum und die Armenier im frühen und hohen Mittelalter: von den ersten Kontakten bis zur Fixierung der Kirchenunion im Jahre 1198* (Cologne, 1996), 189–245.

<sup>5</sup> It would be fascinating, for instance, to determine how many urban centres there were in eleventh-century Armenia, their distribution and ties to one another. Such a survey could also define the differences, if any, between a *mayrak<sup>c</sup>alak<sup>c</sup>*, a calque of *metropolis*, and a *giwlak<sup>c</sup>alak<sup>c</sup>*, a calque of *komopolis*, and how these centres of population were distinguished from an *awan*, town.

<sup>6</sup> N. Garsoïan, 'The Early-Medieval Armenian City: An Alien Element?', *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 16–17 (1984–5), 67–83; repr. in Garsoïan, *Church and Culture in Early Medieval Armenia* (Farnham, 1999), no. VII.

<sup>7</sup> Garsoïan, 'Alien Element', 81. The *mecatun* or wealthy merchant nobility of Ani who emerged, allegedly, at the start of the thirteenth century, are relegated to footnote 97.

<sup>8</sup> Garsoïan, 'Alien Element', 68 and 74. However the tradition that Armenian kings had founded eponymous cities is a common trope in early medieval Armenian historical texts, indicating that there was an awareness that this is what kings should do, irrespective of whether they did or how successful the foundation turned out to be: see for example Vałarš who built Vałaršawan and fortified Vałaršapat: Movsēs Xorenac*i*, *Patmut*iwn hayoc<sup>c</sup>**, ed. M. Abelean and S. Yarut*iwnean*

(Tbilisi, 1913; repr. Erevan, 1991), 199.11 and 200.1–2; tr. R.W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats‘i History of the Armenians* (rev. ed., Ann Arbor, MI, 2006), II.65, at 207–8.

<sup>9</sup> S. Der Nersessian, *Aght‘amar: Church of the Holy Cross* (Cambridge, MA, 1965); J.G. Davies, *Medieval Armenian Art and Architecture: The Church of the Holy Cross, Aght‘amar* (London, 1991); L. Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium: Aght‘amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership* (Farnham, 2007), 53–95; A. Sarafian and O. Köker, *Aghtamar: A Jewel of Medieval Armenian Architecture* (Istanbul, 2010), 107 and 135.

<sup>10</sup> I am very grateful to Professor Paul Magdalino for giving me permission to use this image.

<sup>11</sup> T‘ovma Arcruni, *Patmut‘iwn tann Arcruneac‘*, ed. K. Patkanean (St Petersburg, 1887), 294.27–295.5 and 296.20–9; tr. R.W. Thomson, *History of the House of the Artsrunik‘* (Detroit, 1985), IV.7, 356–8: *zoskezard zp‘oloc‘sn*, golden streets. The site is repeatedly called a city, *k‘alak‘*: 295.5, 296.14 and 296.18.

<sup>12</sup> For the second extension under Smbat II Bagratuni (977–90), see Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i, *Patmut‘iwn Tiezarakan*, ed. S. Malxaseanc‘ (St Petersburg, 1885), 187.13–19; tr. F. Macler, *Histoire Universelle par Étienne Asotik de Tarōn: Deuxième partie, Livre III* (Paris, 1917), III.11, 49. It is generally assumed that it was his father Ašot III Bagratuni (953–77) who built the earlier circuit in the 950s when he transferred to Ani from Kars and granted the latter to his brother Mušel: J.-P. Mahé, ‘L’enceinte urbaine d’Ani (Turquie orientale): problèmes chronologiques’, *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 143.2 (1999), 732–3.

<sup>13</sup> Aristakēs Lastivertc‘i, *Patmut‘iwn Aristakisi Lastivertc‘woy*, ed. K.N. Yuzbašyan (Erevan, 1963), 83.25–84.1; tr. M. Canard and H. Berbérian, *Aristakès de Lastivert: Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne*, Bibliothèque de Byzantion 5 (Brussels, 1973), 74.

<sup>14</sup> Aristakēs 144.28–145.3; Canard and Berbérian, 131.

<sup>15</sup> Aristakēs 26.12–14; Canard and Berbérian, 9. Although Step‘anos does indeed calculate time from Creation, every manuscript of his *History* ends in 1004/5, long before the death of Gagik I Bagratuni who lived until c.1017. If a continuator did extend the original conclusion of Step‘anos’ *History*, no trace of that continuation survives other than via Aristakēs’ own *History*. Turning to the actual relationship, the respective descriptions of the death of David of Tayk‘ and Basil II’s rapid march eastwards are proximate in terms of content but not language: Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i 275.3–276.14, Aristakēs 22.25–8; the same goes for the descriptions of the violence between the *azatagund* of David and the R‘uzk‘/Russians in Basil’s camp: Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i 276.22–277.15,

Aristakēs 23.10–12. However passages describing the award of imperial titles to Bagarat and his father Gurgēn are linguistically proximate: Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i 276.15–21, Aristakēs 24.1–4.

[16](#) Lazar P‘arpec‘i, *Patmut‘iwn Hayoc‘*, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtčean and S. Malxasean (Tbilisi, 1904; repr. Delmar NY, 1986), 1.3–5.5, tr. R.W. Thomson, *The History of Lazar P‘arpec‘i* (Atlanta, GA, 1991), 33–8, identifying the first *History* as that of the blessed Agat‘angelos and the second as that of P‘awstos Buzandac‘i. It is also striking that six of the nine manuscripts upon which Yuzbašian based his edition of Aristakēs also contain the *Universal History* of Step‘anos Tarōnec‘i. Five of these – Mat. 3160, 3502, 3070, 1482 and 4584 – date from the seventeenth century; Mat. 2865 has been dated on palaeographical grounds to the thirteenth century.

[17](#) Aristakēs 22.6–23.22; Canard and Berbérian, 1–2.

[18](#) Aristakēs 141.17–22; Canard and Berbérian, 128:

And after this, when he [Alp Arslan] saw that he [Romanos IV Diogenes] had been seized by his nobles through treachery and they had blinded him and he had not recovered his kingdom but had died from his injuries, he was filled with anger and fury; he wanted to take revenge for his friend but then death apprehended him and he left this world following all created beings, to where kings and paupers are as one.

[19](#) Aristakēs 45.18–19; Canard and Berbérian, 31.

[20](#) Aristakēs 47.2–4; Canard and Berbérian, 33. He also appointed ‘the third of his brothers, who was a eunuch and a monk, whose name was Ōrit‘anōriōs [Orphanotropos] to the royal city of Constantinople, making him *sinklitos* [Gk: σύγκλητος] and giving all the responsibilities and concerns of the palace into his hands’: Aristakēs 47.6–9; Canard and Berbérian, 34. The Armenian text reads *hogs*, responsibilities or cares; the use of *pronoia* for this word in the French translation is misplaced.

[21](#) Aristakēs 52.13–55.6; Canard and Berbérian, 42–3 (partially translated). It is possible that this passage was included because an earlier passage (Aristakēs 44.14–45.19; Canard and Berbérian, 30–1) records Maniakes’ capture of the city of Edessa, traditionally viewed as an Armenian city. The inclusion of this account is of itself interesting, corresponding to the theme of urban devastation explored elsewhere.

[22](#) Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), 500.84–5 and 90–3; tr. B. Flusin, with comm. by J.-C. Cheynet, *Jean Skylitzès, Empereurs de Constantinople* (Paris, 2003),

23 Aristakēs 103.24–5: *yorum hor’om dik’tioni ēr tasn*. The tenth induction: 1.ix.1056–31.viii.1057. See Aristakēs 112.5–22; Canard and Berbérian, 104, for the account of the deposition of Michael and the coronation of Isaac. The only additional detail provided by Aristakēs but missing from Skylitzes is that Michael was tonsured and exiled to an island.

24 Aristakēs 137.12–141.22; Canard and Berbérian, 124–28.

25 Aristakēs 119.1–136.23; Canard and Berbérian, 108–24.

26 Step’anos Tarōnec’i 169.13–170.19; tr. Macler, *Histoire Universelle*, III.6, 23–5.

27 Step’anos Tarōnec’i 186.12–187.6; tr. Macler, *Histoire Universelle*, III.10, 48–9. There are several specific linguistic features in book III that confirm that the original work was in Greek. The figure of Kalokyros Delphinas is identified as Tlp’inas in III.25; in III.44, Nikephoros Ouranos is identified simply as Kanikl, a reflection of his office of Keeper of the Imperial Inkstand, ἐπί τοῦ κανικλείου; and in III.22, Step’anos recalls that Samuel and his brothers were referred to as *Komsajagk’*; this is an Armenian calque of the Greek *Kομητόποντοι*, ‘children of the count’.

28 Uxtanēs, *Patmut’iwn Hayoc’* (Ejmiacin, 1871); part 1 tr. M. Brosset, *Deux historiens arméniens: Kiracos de Gantzac, Oukhtanès d’Ourha* (St Petersburg, 1870). The extracts from the two principal sources are combined but separated into chapters. Uxtanēs exploited Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* via part II of so-called *Anonymous Chronicle*, sometimes attributed to Anania Širakac’i; see T.W. Greenwood, ‘New Light from the East: Chronography and Ecclesiastical History through a Late Seventh-Century Armenian Source’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16.2 (2008), 197–254, for a study of this work. The inclusion of an account of the contemporary cult of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (Uxtanēs 85.22–88.8, Brosset, *Oukhtanès*, §76) is persuasive when identifying his episcopal see as Sebasteia rather than Edessa.

29 Sebasteia: see G. Dédéyan, ‘L’immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XIe siècle’, *Byz* 45 (1975), 41–117; Tarōn: see T.W. Greenwood, ‘Social Change in Eleventh-Century Armenia: The Evidence from Tarōn’, in J.D. Howard-Johnston (ed.), *The Transformation of Byzantium in the Eleventh Century: Social Change in Town and Country* (Oxford, forthcoming); Theodosiopolis: C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire* (976–1025) (Oxford, 2005), 152 and 319–22.

30 Aristakēs 74.10–79.22; Canard and Berbérian, 63–68. The specific references are at Aristakēs 75.3 and 78.1–2. Admittedly Aristakēs, at 115.4, also calls Melitene ‘this city’, *k’alak’s ays*, adding

‘about which we have composed our narrative’ but he does not specifically call it ‘our city’. This association with Melitene may belong to the author of the lament; alternatively it may reflect a move by Aristakēs to Melitene from Arcn.

<sup>31</sup> C. Holmes, ‘Byzantine Historians at the Periphery’, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies London 21–26 August 2006* (Aldershot, 2006), II, 156–7, asked ‘why historians operating on or beyond the periphery of empire read Byzantine historiography and why they chose to integrate it into their narratives’.

<sup>32</sup> Aristakēs 74.9–79.22; 83.15–84.14; 110.22–112.2; 113.1–118.23; and 133.14–136.23; Canard and Berbérian, chs XII, XV, XIX, XXI and XXIV.

<sup>33</sup> Aristakēs 74.11–75.12; Canard and Berbérian, 63–4.

<sup>34</sup> Kars: Aristakēs 84.7; Canard and Berbérian, 74. Melitene: Aristakēs 115.7–8; Canard and Berbérian, 105.

<sup>35</sup> Compare Aristakēs 75.1–2: *vačar akank<sup>c</sup> sora p<sup>c</sup>ar awork<sup>c</sup>, ew ar gnołk<sup>c</sup>n t<sup>c</sup>agawork<sup>c</sup> azgac<sup>c</sup>* with Aristakēs 115.7–8: *oroy vačar akank<sup>c</sup>n p<sup>c</sup>ar awork<sup>c</sup> erkri, ew ar gnołk<sup>c</sup> sora t<sup>c</sup>agawork<sup>c</sup> azgac<sup>c</sup>*.

<sup>36</sup> For the collapse of the Armenian episcopal network and the extension of the Byzantine Church, see T.W. Greenwood, “Imagined Past, Revealed Present”: A Reassessment of *Patmut<sup>c</sup>iwn Tarōnōy [History of Tarōn]*’, *TM* 18 (2014), 377–92, at 384. For unequivocal evidence of the latter, see *Notitia* 10, 56 (the metropolitan province of Keltzene, Kortzene and Tarōn), in J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae Episcopatuum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981), 336. This lists twenty-two new episcopal sees across both Tarōn and Vaspurakan (thereby dating recension c to after the annexation of Vaspurakan in 1021, because it includes sites in that region, and recension d to before that date, because it lacks them).

<sup>37</sup> For the contemporary role of monasteries in reimagining Armenian historical traditions, see Greenwood, “Imagined Past, Revealed Present”, 375–92.

<sup>38</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, 451.28–30: *τὸ Ἀρτζε* tr. Flusin, *Jean Skylitzes*, 374–5. It is also striking that Skylitzes refers to the inhabitants of the city collectively: Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, 451.50: *οἱ Ἀρτζηνοὶ*.

<sup>39</sup> Aristakēs 79.1–4; Canard and Berbérian, 67.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew of Edessa, *Žamanakagruf<sup>c</sup>iwn*, 130–4; tr. Dostourian, *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, II.3, 86–8.

[41](#) A.S. Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner* 5–12 dd. (Erevan, 1988), no. 84.

[42](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 90.

[43](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 101.

[44](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 107.

[45](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 111.

[46](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 118.

[47](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 124.

[48](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 136.

[49](#) Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren Jer’agreri Hišatakaranner*, no. 84.

[50](#) Aristakēs 74.19–20; Canard and Berbérian, 64.

[51](#) *Divan hay vimagrut’yan (Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum)*, 1 Ani K‘alak‘, ed. H.A. Orbeli (Erevan, 1966) I, no. 106, 37 and pl. XII.

[52](#) For the identity of Bagrat, see H. Bartikian, ‘La généalogie du magistros Bagarat, catépan de l’Orient et des Kékauménos’, *Revue des études arméniennes* 2 (1965), 261–72, and P. Lemerle, ‘La famille Vichkatzi-Kékauménos’, *Revue des études arméniennes* 3 (1966), 177–84.

[53](#) J.-P. Mahé, ‘Ani sous Constantin X, d’après une inscription de 1060’, *TM* 14 (2002), 403–14.

[54](#) Aristakēs 62.20–1; Canard and Berbérian, 52: *i Dawit’ ... i Dunac’in.*

## Section III

### State and Church

## 8

### The Second Fall

#### The place of the eleventh century in Roman history

*Mark Whittow*

It is almost obligatory in any discussion of Byzantium to point out that the people we label Byzantines called themselves Romans, and the state we call the Byzantine empire was in fact the empire of the Romans.<sup>1</sup> Obligatory – but, with a few exceptions, rapidly passed over.<sup>2</sup> Edward Gibbon may have seen the decline and fall of the Roman empire as a process that already had its seeds in the age of Augustus, that played out in a series of themes repeated over the centuries, and that only ended in 1453, but no modern historian has taken up the challenge.<sup>3</sup> It is symptomatic that when volume four of the *Cambridge Medieval History* first appeared in 1923, it did so with the title *The Eastern Roman Empire (717–1453)*, and its general editor, J.B. Bury, himself an editor of Gibbon, began his introduction with ‘the capital fact that throughout the Middle Ages the same Empire which was founded by Augustus continued to exist and function’, but when it was reissued in a new edition in 1966, it did so as *The Byzantine Empire*; Bury’s introduction remained, but only for reasons of *pietas*.<sup>4</sup> The framing narrative of modern Byzantine studies is not one of continuity but of radical change, with the seventh century usually seen as decisive.<sup>5</sup> We now talk of late antiquity and

the Middle Ages, with Byzantium as a medieval empire; of the transformation of the Roman world and the end of the ancient economy; of the fall of Rome and the making of Byzantium. A dynastic and comparative history of China stretching from the Qin to the Qing seems an intellectually coherent project; a modern history of Rome written in the same way apparently does not.<sup>6</sup> The eleventh-century Byzantines may have called themselves Romans but we know that they were wrong.

## Byzantium for Rome?

Our confidence in saying this rests in part on the archaeological turn of the 1980s, that moment when, Clive Foss to the fore, we realized that any notion of simple material continuity could not be sustained.<sup>7</sup> The combined evidence from urban excavations, standing buildings, coins and ceramics, made it clear that the empire was a much poorer place in 800 than it had been in 500, and a rather different place in 1050 than in either 800 or 500 – let alone 300 or 100. Somewhere like Ephesos or Thessaloniki in 1050 was a city of scattered knots of settlement in a way that the same places in 500 were not; churches like the eleventh-century Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki could not be confused with any building of the age of Justinian; stray coin finds, which had become so rare in the eighth century, were common again by the eleventh century, but of a rather different nature to the system in 500; and in a way most striking because so universal, the ubiquitous red slip pottery and cylindrical transport amphorae of the sixth century had been replaced by glazed wares and globular amphorae, or even by barrels.<sup>8</sup> In these facts, a transition from Rome to Byzantium seemed to be encapsulated.

Poorer in 800, smaller too. Size seems to matter. The empire in 300 stretched from Hadrian's Wall to the deserts of Arabia, and from the Rhine to the Sahara. The empire in 600 still stretched from Italy to Arabia, and from the Danube to the Sahara. The empire in 1050 was much larger than it

had been in the eighth century when it was limited to Anatolia and the fringes of the Balkans, plus Sicily and some Italian fragments, but even so it was still no more than a quarter of the size of the empire Constantine ruled in 330. To call both the Roman empire could seem wilfully misleading.<sup>9</sup>

Yet while these facts are true, the conclusion that Byzantium was not Rome is a non sequitur. To begin with the material evidence, quite clearly this tells a story of contraction and recession in the seventh and eighth centuries, and recovery by the eleventh; quite clearly too the empire's material culture in 1050 was different from what it had been half a millennium earlier; but neither fact says anything significant about political systems or identity.<sup>10</sup> No complex material culture on earth has remained substantially unchanged over such a period of time, certainly not that of China whose political continuity we take for granted.<sup>11</sup> What matters more are the deep structures that lie behind the surface phenomena of church architecture, ceramic types and the like.

Here size would seem to be crucial, and to an extent it is, but not in any absolute sense. Size matters to human beings in terms of experienced space – the sort of geography we have in mind when we say such things as ‘the world is getting smaller’ – and by that standard the empire of Constantine IX in 1050 was, contrary to the impression given by maps, still a very similar size to that of Constantine I, seven centuries before.<sup>12</sup>

This is counterintuitive so let me say more. Obviously Constantine I's empire was larger in the sense that it covered an area perhaps four times that of Constantine IX. At nearly 4,500 km as the crow flies, it is also true that the distance from Hadrian's Wall to the deserts of Arabia was some 2,000 km greater than from the equivalent extremities of the eleventh-century empire, but those figures are in practice beside the point. To go from one end of the empire to the other is an unlikely journey few can be imagined to have taken at any period. The real distances that matter, and hence the effective size of the empire, are those from the provinces and frontiers to the capital, and from that perspective a radius of a little over 1,000 km applies as well to the empire in 330 as 1050. In human terms a traveller setting out from Antioch, the eleventh-century empire's Syrian

bastion, or from Trier, the fourth-century empire's watch on the Rhine, would have expected to have arrived in either Constantinople or Rome respectively, about six or seven weeks later.<sup>13</sup> At 1,000 km the journey from Aquitaine to Rome was appreciably longer than that from Cappadocia to Constantinople, but if the imperial court was based at Milan, Ravenna or even Trier, as it was for much of the fourth and fifth centuries, then the distance and journey time was not very different. In either case a month and a half would usually have brought supplicants to the feet of power.

So far I have assumed travel by land, but thinking about the sea makes the same point. Two thousand kilometres, or just over ten days' continuous sailing, was about the maximum required to reach an imperial capital from almost anywhere in the Mediterranean.<sup>14</sup> In practice sailing was not continuous and winds were not reliable, but the fact remains that the journey times by sea between a capital and the empire's main Mediterranean ports were much the same in the fourth as in the eleventh century. The loss of territorial area had paradoxically made little difference.

With that issue put to one side, we can return to deep structure, which must be the crucial point. First, however, let us look west. In the 1970s and 1980s a series of mostly French historians, writing mostly about what is now France, made the case that the ancient world only came to an end in the eleventh century – the revolution of the year 1000. It is an idea often associated with Georges Duby, who certainly first established the notion of a revolutionary moment either side of the millennium, but Duby himself, to begin with at least, thought of the revolution of the year 1000 as only one among many, and he certainly did not see this as the single 'end of the ancient world'.<sup>15</sup> That should be credited instead to Pierre Bonnassie and Guy Bois, to Michel Zimmerman and Christian Lauranson-Rosaz, and to the so-called fiscalists, Jean Durliat and Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier.<sup>16</sup>

All of these historians draw attention to the survival of apparently Romanizing features in the social and political culture of the Midi and Catalonia – Roman naming patterns, Roman-style slavery, Roman law – and the argument is that this adds up to the persistence of deep structures that

equate with a definition of the ancient world. Not everyone has been convinced, especially not in the English-speaking world.<sup>17</sup>

In part that reflects a language gap. Although Bonnassie's important paper 'Du Rhône à la Galice', first given at the Rome conference on feudal societies in 1978, was reissued in English translation in 1991, and Guy Bois's book on the Maconnais village of Lournand, appeared the following year as *The Transformation of the Year 1000*, almost nothing by Zimmerman, Lauranson-Rosaz, Durliat and Magnou-Nortier has appeared in English, and Bonnassie's wonderfully readable magnum opus on Catalonia has only done so in disjointed extracts.<sup>18</sup> But more important, the lack of impact reflects a resistance to the central claims being made by all these historians about deep structures. Thanks to their work the persistence of Roman names, of slavery, of written Roman law cannot be ignored, but that hardly adds up to the survival of the ancient world as a system.

What would do that, in many people's eyes at least, would be evidence for the survival of the Roman fiscal system. At its most fundamental, what differentiated the Roman state from any in the high medieval west was the fact that Rome was based on taxation. Tax levied on the population at large paid for a standing army that permitted the existence of a civilian landowning elite, and a corps of paid officials who worked with the landed elite to administer the empire. Those with power looked to the imperial centre because it was from there that the military was controlled, and there where rewards and offices were handed out to the obedient. Tax demands and military expenditure stimulated the economy, and the existence of wealthy transregional elites created the sort of connected economy that multiplied economic potential. Without taxation the Roman world as such, its capitals, its culture, its identity, would have been impossible.<sup>19</sup>

Durliat and Magnou-Nortier take this head on, and argue that Roman fiscal structures did survive effectively intact until the tenth century, but insofar as anybody this side of the Channel has engaged with their work, it has only been to dismiss it.<sup>20</sup> On one level that is a pity because their publications express an original point of view backed by powerful erudition, but I must confess that I am no more persuaded by their basic argument

than anyone else. I can see that conceptually some aspects of the later language of property have their roots in that of the late Roman fiscal system, but otherwise I can see no evidence for the functional survival of taxation on a Roman model. Some of the epiphenomena of the Roman world may have survived – indeed given the persistence of Latin and Christianity it would be hard to imagine how that could not have happened – but the fundamental structures of the Roman empire in the west had gone, to my mind long before the tenth century.

This western story matters to Byzantinists because the contrast between east and west serves to highlight the essential fact that in the east the deep structures of the Roman state incontrovertibly did survive. Eleventh-century architecture had little in common with that of the fourth; eleventh-century naming patterns did not preserve those of the Roman past; but the fundamental structures of the Roman empire as they had existed in the fourth century were still there seven hundred years later. I shall limit myself to four. The first is imperial autocracy, constrained by no constitution, but only by convention, or perhaps better expressed as only by *habitus* in the sense made familiar by Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>21</sup> Emperors at both periods needed to behave as emperors, and as Christian emperors they had to be Orthodox. In fact they could by definition hardly be otherwise. Only in retrospect could an emperor's Orthodoxy be called into question. The emperor acted by law, but was not constrained by law; and imperial officials had no authority save as an emanation of that of the emperor. Imperial policy was in practice governed by conventional wisdom and long-standing practice, but remained notionally at least the emperor's policy alone.<sup>22</sup> The second is the existence of a capital city. Whether at Rome or Constantinople, or for that matter at Ravenna, Milan, Trier, Thessaloniki, Antioch or wherever, the empire always had a capital, and the exercise of imperial power was unthinkable without it. Emperors might leave the capital from time to time, most obviously to lead an army on campaign. As late as the seventh century they might conceivably create a new capital.<sup>23</sup> But, however mobile, emperors were never itinerant; and at the heart of imperial politics was the imperial court – a world of titles, offices, ranks, ceremony and salaries which could only

operate with the facilities provided by a fixed capital.<sup>24</sup> Control of the capital was the essential underpinning of any regime. An emperor without a capital, without the plant represented by palace and court, was unthinkable, and indeed impracticable. In the eleventh century just as much as in the fourth or fifth, usurpers without capitals soon failed. The third, as Durliat and Magnou-Nortier would agree, is taxation. The power of the emperor, the role of the capital, both depended on revenue produced by taxation and paid in coin. Some tax could be collected in kind, some payments could be made in kind, and there were fewer coins available at some periods rather than others; but the empire was always based on a monetarized economy. Not completely monetarized, of course, but never demonetarized.<sup>25</sup> Such a system required trained officials to run it. There had to be professional representatives of the state to account for what had been collected and to ensure that it came to the emperor. In other words a bureaucracy, which in practice could only be housed in the capital. Court and capital on the one hand, taxation on the other, were two aspects of the same system. Tax might be collected by officials, it might be farmed, or the task might be delegated to members of the local elite. In practice these categories were likely to be blurred, but in any case the process ultimately depended on the consent of the local elite, which therefore had an unavoidable political voice. Emperors could not ignore completely provincial cries of woe because those same provincials were taxpayers. Their demands might be for lower taxes or protection from oppression by local power-holders, but the fundamental equation was tax for security, hence the fourth item in this list: a paid army. The persistence of this fundamental feature of the Roman empire through to the eleventh century has been somewhat obscured for Byzantinists by the dual red herring of the theme system and the issue of military lands. The debate has seemingly now been put to rest – few if any now believe that there was ever a stage when soldiers were not paid; but there is certainly no dispute that in the eleventh century the empire depended on a paid army.<sup>26</sup> An army paid from the proceeds of taxation gave emperors a near monopoly of military power which was certainly not the case for any polity in the early medieval west. It also allowed them to hire soldiers from outside

imperial territory. In other words, the soldiers did not have to be the same people as the taxpayers, and for many states including the Roman empire at any period that has been a perennially attractive solution to a variety of political problems. It also, of course, brings risks.

Periodization is always potentially problematic, but focusing on a list like this of fundamental structures helps to avoid the danger on the one hand of assuming that all those who called themselves Romans were in some sense essentially the same; and on the other of failing to see how much continued beneath superficial change. The changes, for example, to the urban environment conventionally summed up as the ‘end of the ancient city’ were far from superficial and they are real enough, but they do not equate to the end of the Roman empire.<sup>27</sup> The basic political structures that I have identified above needed only one city – the imperial capital – and even the most pessimistic agree that one ‘ancient city’, namely Constantinople, did survive.<sup>28</sup> It has become usual to talk of the world of the fourth, fifth and sixth century as ‘late antiquity’. The seventh century easily fits under the same label, the eighth possibly too. Glen Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Grabar, the editors of *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* included Islam and decided to stop in 800.<sup>29</sup> But why there? In the eastern empire 800 was no turning point, and if not 800, then 900 and 1000 are no better. The inescapable fact would seem to be, as J.B. Bury recognized, that ‘the same Empire which was founded by Augustus continued to exist and function’ long into what we choose to call the Byzantine era.<sup>30</sup> Seeing it as part of a long-term comparative history of the Roman empire is not the only way to see the eleventh-century Byzantium, but it is not one to be totally neglected either.

## Crisis and response: two falls compared

Politics take much of their form from the deep structures of a society. How events play out, how polities respond to crises, in turn reflects the structure

of politics. Those truisms do not imply that structures determine outcomes but nonetheless they do point to the uncontroversial conclusion that structures frame the field of possibilities. Comparative analysis from this perspective does not reveal the path of history as retrospectively inevitable, but it does make shared patterns stand out, and the course of events more explicable. Seen in reverse, an awareness of shared patterns also offers a way into reconstructing imperfectly recorded events. Indeed that is a basic assumption for anyone trying to write pre-modern history.

If the Roman empire ‘fell’ in the fifth century, which is the conventional understanding, then it has to be acknowledged that it fell several times. First in the fifth, then in the seventh, then in the later eleventh, then in 1204, and finally in 1453. Not all of these episodes occurred in the same way. 1453 was a conquest of which the remaining Romans were little more than impotent observers. The fall of the seventh century was the result of what has been dubbed a ‘human tsunami’ which overwhelmed Roman resistance.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the fifth, the eleventh or the thirteenth century, there was no question of the seventh-century Roman state being in any way complicit with the conquerors. In 1204 that was very much at least part of the story. The armies of the Fourth Crusade were only outside the city walls at all because the exiled Alexios had invited them there as the best means to recover his throne.<sup>32</sup> Even so, although 1204 should certainly be understood as a product of the empire’s political system, it was nonetheless a single event rather than a process, which by contrast is how the falls of the fifth and the eleventh century were experienced and worked though. On both occasions disaster came effectively out of the blue. The crisis was triggered by movements in the steppe world over which the Romans had no influence, but the fall as such was brought about not so much by the external actors as by the political response of the Roman elite. In short at two points in its history the Roman empire experienced a crisis of similar form which generated a similar systemic response.

On both occasions disaster came effectively out of the blue? A generation ago that might still have been controversial. The fourth and the eleventh century were seen as periods of decline after earlier golden ages, but in both

cases that is hardly any longer the case. The former has been swept up in the general re-evaluation of late antiquity, and is now usually characterized as an age of economic prosperity, cultural flowering and accepted imperial power.<sup>33</sup> Much the same could be said too for the eleventh century. By any measure the eleventh-century empire seems to be better off than the tenth or the ninth, certainly through to the 1060s at least.<sup>34</sup> As the chapters in this volume document, an age of economic prosperity, cultural flowering and confident imperial power would seem to be a fair description of the reigns of the last Macedonians.

The rise of Sasanian Iran had weakened Rome's strategic dominance after 220, forcing the empire to concentrate resources in the east and leaving fewer to face challenges elsewhere, but although that was a partial factor in the events of 376–8, the Persians let Rome deal with the crisis that followed largely undisturbed.<sup>35</sup> The rise of larger and more powerful polities beyond Rome's northern borders similarly altered the strategic balance, but the empire's continued ability to outfight the Goths, Alemanni, Franks, Burgundians and others was not really in doubt.<sup>36</sup> More than the rise of the western empire after 962, the appearance of the Normans in southern Italy was to present the empire with a serious problem, but not until the late 1040s at earliest, and in any case Italy was peripheral to the empire's main strategic interests.<sup>37</sup> In both periods the case for long-standing military decline would seem to be largely a product of hindsight.

Curiously more controversial is the view that the crisis was triggered by movements in the steppe world and the fall was brought about by the political response of the Roman elite. Or rather what is curious is that this is controversial as an explanation of fourth- and fifth-century events, whereas for the eleventh century it seems no more than a statement of the obvious. The contemporary accounts of Michael Attaleiates, writing in the early 1080s, and John Skylitzes, writing in the 1090s (and repeated by Nikephoros Bryennios, writing in the early twelfth century), expressly state that the crisis was a Turkish crisis; and that the Turks concerned were the Seljuk dynasty who had their origins beyond Persia from where they had moved to overthrow the Ghaznavid sultanate in the 1040s, the Buyids in the 1050s, and

by the 1060s had established an empire that stretched from Khwarazm to the Roman borders.<sup>38</sup> These authors understood well enough that while the Turks who were overrunning Armenia and raiding deep into Roman Anatolia may not always have been under the sultan's direct control, they nonetheless had only been brought west as a consequence of Seljuk expansion. They also understood that the appearance of the Pečenegs, who first crossed the Danube in large numbers in 1046–7, was the result of Oğuz pressure coming from further east.<sup>39</sup> Michael Psellos has nothing to say about the origins of the Turks – any admission that there was a real Turkish crisis would have made Romanos IV's efforts seem less ludicrous – but like the others he knew that the Pečeneg migration had been triggered by events to the east.<sup>40</sup> Both migrations in fact may have had the same ultimate cause, and it is possible that there were those in the office of the Logothete of the Dromos with access to the sorts of reports that the *De Administrando Imperio* has preserved for the tenth century who had views on this, but if so it did not reach the historians, for whom this was just as obscure as it is to us.<sup>41</sup>

What none of these historians quite states, although it is implicit in their accounts, is that while the battle of Manzikert was a setback, it was only the subsequent civil war, the political paralysis that that engendered, and above all the approach that the Roman elites took to the Turks that led to the fall of the empire in the east. This is a theme that has been brought out by a number of authors since the 1980s, but the seminal work has been that of Jean-Claude Cheynet and Peter Frankopan.<sup>42</sup> The battle itself explains little. The losses of trained troops may well have been serious, but part of the very reason for the defeat was the premature retreat of the forces under Andronikos Doukas, and a lack of troops did not prevent the civil war that followed. Even the civil war is not a complete explanation. It was confined to a series of short episodes and Anatolia is a large place. Nikephoros Botaneiates, for example, effectively sat out the years between 1074 and 1077 in the central Anatolian theme of the Anatolikon, which evidently saw no such fighting.<sup>43</sup> Most of the inhabitants of Anatolia were similarly not directly affected. The Norman Roussel found no difficulty in establishing

regional security for long periods during 1073–5, and as Cheynet has demonstrated by reference to a combination of the familiar literary sources and the evidence of the seals, much of the military and civilian apparatus was still intact as late as 1081.<sup>44</sup> Even the direct actions of the Turks themselves can be exaggerated. Numbers were evidently large, at least on occasion; and we seem to be talking about migration rather than simply warbands; but any figure is speculative.<sup>45</sup> They sacked a number of prominent sites, including Theodosiopolis, Caesarea, Neocaesarea, Amorion, and the great shrine of St Michael at Chonai, but once again, Anatolia is a large place, where raiding and the sacking of cities was not new.<sup>46</sup> As late as the early tenth century Arab armies had been doing exactly this on a close to annual basis. Amorion and Ankara, for example, were both sacked in 931.<sup>47</sup> It says much too about the Turkish presence that when the western coastlands of Asia Minor were restored to Byzantine control in the wake of the First Crusade it was the work of a single campaigning season, and effectively a single expedition to encourage what Turks there were in the west to retreat to the plateau.<sup>48</sup>

The real explanation for the loss of Anatolia was, as Frankopan has pointed out more clearly than anyone else, the fact that it was handed over to them by the Roman elite.<sup>49</sup> The fundamental structures of the empire – imperial autocracy, a capital city, taxation and a paid army – ensured that politics would be focused on Constantinople and that the supreme goal would have to be control of the imperial office, either in person or through means of a compliant relative. The provinces mattered as a source of revenue, but provincial power in itself was always just that. Power in the provinces, most obviously gained through military command, had to be translated into control of Constantinople in order to be secure or even effective for very long. George Maniakes and Leo Tornikios in the eleventh century, Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas all exemplify this.<sup>50</sup> Even Roussel, however temporarily successful his hold on Armeniakon or parts of Lykaonia and Galatia, was always looking to Constantinople as his goal.<sup>51</sup>

In the wake of the battle of Manzikert, with Romanos IV in Turkish hands, there was no emperor in secure control of Constantinople, and naturally the leading political players would hurry to stake their claims. The Doukas family in practice had little option but to try to seize power first. Whatever Andronikos had actually done at Manzikert, these kinsmen of Romanos' predecessor on the imperial throne could not be trusted by anyone else. For their own safety they needed to have one of theirs on the throne. Under normal circumstances their speed would have ensured stable success, and the advice famously given by the author we know as Kekaumenos would have worked in favour of Michael VII as much as it had worked for Constantine VII or any other of his mild literature-loving predecessors:

If someone should revolt, and declare himself emperor, don't enter into his plot but leave him. If you should be able to fight and overthrow him, fight on behalf of the Emperor and the public peace; but if you are not able to fight him, leave him – as I said – and, after seizing some fortification with your men, write to the Emperor, and endeavour, as far as you can, to do [the Emperor] some service, so that you may be honoured, both yourself and your children, and your men. If you don't have any men to seize a fortification, abandon everything and flee to the Emperor. ... No-one has ever dared to create an uprising against the Emperor, trying as well to destroy the peace of Romania, who has not been destroyed himself. So, for this reason, I advise you, my beloved children, whom God has given me, to be on the side of the Emperor, and in his service. For the Emperor who sits in Constantinople always wins.<sup>52</sup>

What made circumstances different now was the presence of the Turks, not as a threat to be destroyed, but as an asset to be exploited. Without the Turks the Doukai had only to defeat Romanos and Roussel; with the Turks there was a constant opportunity for new rivals to find alternative military support. These Turks were not superhuman warriors, but they were hardy, they were cheap (it was a better living serving for pay than herding sheep), and they were available. They were also, by reason of being at least notional Muslims, not in a position to seize the throne for themselves. Through the decade after Manzikert, the Doukai, Roussel, Nikephoros Botaneiates, and Nikephoros Melissenos, all looked to the Turks for military support, and in doing so handed over to them the fortresses that secured Asia Minor.<sup>53</sup>

The ultimate logic of the situation has been identified by Frankopan, and duly followed after 1081. The rise of Alexios Komnenos had been as dependent on this new factor in Roman politics as any other, and the new regime's security rested as much as anything else on its ability to trump all rivals as the supreme paymaster of the Turks.<sup>54</sup> The outcome was a deal with Sulayman ibn Kutlumush which left him as the emperor's client ruler of Anatolia, and in exchange gave Alexios a monopoly of Turkish manpower in the Roman world. Only then, as Cheynet's study of the seal evidence shows, do Roman office-holders begin to disappear from Anatolia, and the Roman empire in the east come to an end.<sup>55</sup> A crisis triggered by movements in the steppe world had been filtered through the structures of Roman politics to cause imperial collapse.

Turning back to the late fourth and fifth century, such a verdict, as already mentioned would be controversial. On the face of it that might seem odd. In the first place we have Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the 380s, and admittedly a subtle and complex historian who resists taking at face value, but nonetheless by any standards a well-informed contemporary account, saying quite plainly that the crisis had its origin in the steppe world to the east.<sup>56</sup> ‘The seed-bed and origin of all this destruction and of the various calamities inflicted by the wrath of Mars, which raged with unusual fury,’ he writes, ‘I find to be this ...’ – and he goes on to explain how the appearance of the nomadic Huns east of the sea of Azov had forced the Goths to move west, and eventually for many of them in 376 to seek refuge in the empire. Initially welcoming, the Roman authorities mis-calculated how difficult large numbers of migrating Goths would be to control. Tensions led to revolt; and revolt led to the battle of Adrianople in 378 where a large part of the Roman field army was destroyed, and the emperor Valens killed.<sup>57</sup>

Since the early 1990s Peter Heather, in a variety of places and at various lengths, has pieced together a narrative for what happened next – not an easy task given that Ammianus stops at this point and the only evidence available is patchy and ignores what must have been key episodes.<sup>58</sup> The war continued until 382 by when, Heather believes, the Romans had decided that since they could not destroy the Goths it made sense to recognize their

autonomy in exchange for military service. Under those terms they fought for the emperor Theodosius in 387 and 393, but underlying tensions between Goths and Romans led to renewed war after 395, and in the early fifth century, under the leadership of Alaric, they invaded Italy and in 410 sacked Rome itself – apparently the outcome of an attempt to extract concessions from the western emperor Honorius that did not pay off. Short of food the Goths then left for Gaul, where eventually terms were agreed that established a Gothic kingdom in Aquitaine.

Meanwhile, the Huns had crossed the Carpathians and by 410 established themselves in Pannonia and on the Hungarian plain where their presence had a similar effect to that of the their original arrival on the Pontic steppe in the mid-fourth century – this time, Heather argues, forcing the Suevi, Vandals and Alans to head west for the Roman frontier which they crossed in 406.<sup>59</sup> This was not a peaceful process, as the disappearance of any subsequent reference to Rome's Rhine army surely indicates. Nor did they stop there. By 410 they were in Spain, and in the late 420s, the Vandals crossed to Africa, seizing Carthage in 439 – a disastrous development since it cut Rome off from its African grain supply, and any western regime from a major source of revenue. The combination of newly arrived invaders coming from the north, Goths in the south, and the Vandals in Africa eventually proved fatal. The landowning aristocracy of Gaul hung on to the empire right through to the 460s. Ironically its survival owed more than a little to the Huns. As long as they remained a powerful force in central Europe, that threat encouraged the Goths, Franks, Alans and other potential victims to band together under a Roman banner. The Huns also provided military support for Roman regimes.<sup>60</sup> But when Hun power collapsed in the 460s the truth was revealed that the western empire had fallen – overthrown by a perfect storm, triggered by the Huns.

At the same time as Heather has been telling this story, another group of historians, Walter Goffart, Guy Halsall and Michael Kulikowski to the fore, have been arguing that Rome's fall in the west did not follow from barbarian migration and conquest, but was essentially the outcome of internal factors.<sup>61</sup> Barbarian invasions happened, sometimes on a large scale,

but rather than migrating peoples, we should be thinking of warbands or armies, characterized by ethnicized identity, but in no way homogeneous ethnic groups.<sup>62</sup> Ammianus' explanation of the crisis has been misunderstood because we are thinking of the whole of the west, whereas he was simply talking about events of the 370s and the battle of Adrianople. Rather than forcing the empire to accept terms in 382 and a treaty which guaranteed their continued autonomous existence, the Goths had actually been forced to surrender. The crisis which Ammianus had in mind was therefore over.<sup>63</sup> Heather's supposition that the Suevi, Vandals and Alans crossed the Rhine under pressure from the Huns is mere supposition.<sup>64</sup> The only reason it did not end there was because the empire was keen to continue to employ Goths as soldiers. Alaric was not the leader of the Goths, but the leader of a Gothic army who sought to force his way into the Roman system, like any other Roman general.<sup>65</sup>

What caused the fall of the west was fundamentally the failure of any imperial regime to establish itself securely after 423. When Honorius died in that year the empire appeared set for recovery. Alaric's Goths were now settled on Roman terms in Aquitaine, acting as part of the Roman army in Gaul; order was being restored in Spain, and the prospects were good for northern Gaul too.<sup>66</sup> By the 460s the empire was slipping to its end, not because of the actions of the Goths or the Vandals as such, but because the intervening years had seen almost constant civil war, where barbarian groups like these had been essential to all parties' claims to power.<sup>67</sup> Rome was not conquered; rather, in Halsall's phrase, it accidentally committed suicide.<sup>68</sup>

It is not my purpose to judge between these views, rather to note that reading the extensive literature that this debate has generated from the perspective of a historian interested primarily in the eleventh century two things stand out. The first is how much there is, and how hotly contested the issues are. I was taking part in a conference in 2013, looking at a wider late antique theme, but involving several of the participants in the debate. As I sat there, scholars from different fields kept on asking me, 'What is going

on? Why are they getting so cross?’ Well, I tried to explain, the fall of the Roman empire is a central topic in European history; and it also raises questions of ethnicity, the impact of migration and the nature of civilization which are touchy issues. ... They remained bemused. But looking back over the last two decades and more, there is no doubt that heat has produced light. Thanks to a lively debate, hotly contested, the issues really have become clearer and we know more as a result. Historians of the eleventh-century crisis might benefit from taking the issues they explore just as seriously. Is the transformation of Anatolia really any less central a topic for the history of Europe? The second though rather contradicts the first. What also stands out from an eleventh-century perspective is just how much common ground there is between the two sides. Less heat might generate more light.

The case for the crisis being triggered by events in the steppe world, which seems so obvious for the eleventh century, actually seems fairly obvious for the late fourth and fifth century too. Whatever happened in 382, whatever the extent of continuity between the Gothic groups who crossed the Danube in 376 and the Goths who settled in Aquitaine in the 420s, the ongoing political instability of the fifth century was only so serious because there were Goths, Vandals, Franks and Huns to draw into conflict at the centre, playing as they did so the same part as the Turks would play in the empire of the 1070s. To minimize the role of the Huns runs the risk of making the fall of the Roman west too parochial and insufficiently global an event.

At the same time the internal and systemic dimension of the fall of the west should not be lost either. By comparison with the late fourth and fifth century the political instability of the eleventh was short-lived. By doing a deal with the Turks and by abandoning Anatolia for more than a decade, Alexios Komnenos bought time and a monopoly of power that restored the system to normality for another century. His imperial predecessors in the fifth century tried hard to do the same.<sup>69</sup> Whatever the merits of their other points, the case made in particular by Halsall for ‘der Primat der Innenpolitik’ seems from an eleventh-century perspective just as obvious as

that for the origins of the crisis in the distant steppes. Historians are usually warned against hindsight, but here taking a long view of Roman history does seem to pay off.

## Notes

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54 Anna Komnene, 21, 24; Frankopan, *The First Crusade*, 46–8.

55 Cheynet, ‘La résistance aux Turcs’, 144–7.

56 G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), 1–8.

[57](#) Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. W. Seyfarth (Leipzig, 1978), 31.2–13.

[58](#) P. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), 147–224; P. Heather, ‘The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe’, *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), 4–41; P. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996), 135–51; P. Heather, ‘Goths and Huns, c.320–425’, in *Cambridge Ancient History XIII*, 507–15; P. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (2005), 182–250; P. Heather, ‘410 and the End of Civilisation’, in J. Lipps, C. Machado and P. von Rummel (eds), *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD: The Event, its Context and its Impact*, Pallia 28 (Wiesbaden, 2013), 433–47.

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[60](#) Heather, ‘The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire’, 9, 17, 26, 29, 31.

[61](#) W. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (2006); W. Goffart, ‘Rome, Constantinople, and the Barbarians’, *American Historical Review* 86 (1981), 275–306; W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans AD 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (1980); G. Halsall, ‘Two Worlds Become One: A “Counter-Intuitive” View of the Roman Empire and “Germanic” Migration’, *German History* 32 (2014), 515–32; G. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (2007); G. Halsall, ‘Movers and Shakers: The Barbarians and the Fall of Rome’, *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999), 131–45; M. Kulikowski, ‘Barbarische Identität: Aktuelle Forschungen und neue Interpretationsansätze’, in M. Konrad and C. Witschel (eds), *Römische Legionslager in den Rhein- und Donau-provinzen: Nuclei spätantik-frümmittelalterlichen Lebens?* (Munich, 2012), 103–11; M. Kulikowski, *Rome’s Gothic Wars from the Third Century to Alaric* (2007), 124–8, 136, 152. See too, slightly at arm’s length from the debate, P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), 385–90, and W. Pohl, ‘Rome and the Barbarians in the 5th century’, *Antiquité Tardive* 16 (2008), 93–101.

[62](#) Halsall, ‘Two Worlds Become One’, 523; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 211, 455–6; Kulikowski, *Rome’s Gothic Wars*, 98–9. For scepticism even about movements on the large scale see P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997), 277–313, and J.F. Drinkwater, *The Alamanni and Rome, 213–496* (Oxford, 2007), 323–4.

[63](#) Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 180–5.

[64](#) Halsall, ‘Two Worlds Become One’, 529–30; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides* 75–9.

65 Kulikowski, ‘The Failure of Roman Arms’, in *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD*, 77–83; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 202–6.

66 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 224–37.

67 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 237–83.

68 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 283.

69 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 222, 226, 228, 231–4, 243, 247.

## 9

### Storm Clouds and a Thunderclap

#### East–west tensions towards the mid-eleventh century

*Jonathan Shepard*

The outlines of the ‘storm clouds’ under discussion will be as familiar to modern observers as are some of the ‘weather systems’ to which they belong. They involve the quickening of long-distance trading and written communications in the course of the long eleventh century (c.950–c.1100);<sup>1</sup> ever more frequent face-to-face encounters of western Christians with easterners and Muslims and also, in Scandinavia and Rus, with pagans; the Byzantine commonwealth’s extension to virtually its fullest extent, while Latin ecclesiastical organization spread north and east; and the quest among western churchmen for clear-cut, canonical, authorities, at a time when the German emperors’ material power and sense of divine mandate was hardening: a quest for precision articulated in the Investiture Contest with the emperor.

The significance and even the existence of some of these developments have become controversial in recent years. The very concepts of the Byzantine Commonwealth and the Investiture Contest are open to question,<sup>2</sup> while the so-called Church Schism runs up against abundant evidence of amicable exchanges and cooperation between the Byzantine

government, the papacy, and western political leaders long after 1054. Religious ‘orthodoxy’ itself now appears more labile than previously supposed, with the ‘thunderclap’ of excommunications between Michael Kerouarios and the papal legates liable to relegation to the level of a freak storm, virtually a ‘non-event’.<sup>3</sup> Our aim is neither to try to restore to 1054 the status of a turning point in east–west relations nor to track down some other event or set of polemics that might be said to have changed the situation irrevocably. Our concern is, rather, with the contradictory tendencies that were in play in a period of rapid socioeconomic growth, proliferating resource centres, expanding functional literacy in many parts of Europe and, in some Lotharingian, northern French and north Italian cathedral schools, intellectual training that went far beyond the copying of, and commentaries on, texts to close analysis of terminology, with ever higher expectations of precision and clarification of the meaning of rites and symbols.<sup>4</sup>

These stirrings are most evident in western Europe, but there are hints of comparable phenomena in Byzantium, too.<sup>5</sup> And they could be seen as part of a general tendency towards Christian convergence, encompassing the Mediterranean world and indeed all Europe, as cults, texts and concepts circulated more freely together with persons and commodities. However, they could also foster a certain impatience with the status quo and a quest for rectification of long-held errors and malpractices, in pursuit of a superior moral order and in accordance with more stringent rules and clear-cut imperial or ecclesiological authority. Such tendencies towards the stricter demarcation of boundaries and norms just at a time when alternatives and variants become readily available have received elucidation from Frederic Barth; and I have myself attempted to characterize the long eleventh century as an era of ‘convergence and collision’, when physical barriers were lowered, only for new limitations and exclusions to be imposed by human agency.<sup>6</sup> What follows will point out some of the new channels of communication that came into intensive use, not least the development of ‘Circuits’ engirdling most of Europe, as well as a tendency towards the pooling of cults, customs and cultures. Attention will also be given to the

role of various upholders of authority, whether they were the guardians of existing customs or ambitious proponents of a better order of things. A key theme will be the contradictory tendencies: a certain unarticulated blurring of cultural and religious differences as against those which inclined towards the restatement and accentuation of dividing lines.

Communications were germane to the workings of the Circuits, and the increasingly frequent travels by individuals will be highlighted. So, too, will the repercussions of the increase in mass pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which epitomize the contrasting tendencies towards commonality, universalist pretensions and defensive demarcations. On the one hand, the mounting numbers of visitors to the Holy Land were a sign of shared Christian piety, risk-taking and concelebration of festivals such as Easter. On the other, the pilgrims' routes crossed or skirted the eastern empire, at a time when it had extended its borders as far as the northernmost reaches of the Holy Land. Emperors were not slow to exploit the opportunities that patronage of pilgrims travelling through their lands could bring. By around 1050, visitors to the Holy Sepulchre were being treated to a spectacular display of the *basileus'* solicitousness for the shrine and of the continuity between his dominion and that of the first, universal, Christian emperor, Constantine (p. 133–4). Comparable displays of imperial power and eastern Christian liturgical rigour were, at the same time, being mounted in new-built churches, such as St Sophia of Ohrid, on one of the main land routes of pilgrims from the west.<sup>7</sup>

In short, the accelerating movements of persons around Europe's Circuits and the drawing power of Jerusalem had the incidental effect of advertising Byzantium's material might and resources, and vindicating its rulers' claim to widespread, albeit not universal, hegemony. Conversely, Byzantium's inhabitants were exposed to the manners and religious practices of the pilgrims and other Christian travellers who were passing through. It is, I suggest, in light of such circulation that one should view a number of phenomena that constitute reactions to the easing of communications, being assertions of unassailable correctness if not worldwide hegemony, in the name of three discrete parties: the western emperor Henry II; Pope Leo IX

and his associates; and a group of rigorist Byzantine churchmen headed by Patriarch Michael Kerouarios and counting Archbishop Leo of Ohrid among its proponents. Only the lattermost party engaged in outright polemics, and even Leo's opening shot, his letter on the Latins' use of azymes and other errors, was somewhat oblique, in that it dealt with a handful of everyday rites or customs, and not with formal disputes over jurisdiction or doctrine (p. 142). Yet one should not mistake such obliqueness for an ingenuous or irenic disposition and, it will be suggested, the stances of the other two parties likewise amounted to antithesis, albeit facing inwards or eastwards rather than westwards, and doing without systematic, written exegeses. The visual and occasional verbal signals emanating from papal and western imperial circles are tantamount to the storm clouds of weather systems in the process of formation. And from the writings of Leo of Ohrid and other texts written just after the thunderclap of 16 July 1054, it is clear that pressure had been building up for some time among eastern churchmen, too, against Christians adhering stubbornly to their 'own form of worship' (see pp. [141–2](#), [143](#)).

Before looking closer at the quickening of communications and at the gathering storm clouds, one should note another aspect of convergence and collision: if organized Christianity stopped at the Elbe and the walls of Cherson around 950, three generations later it lapped around the Baltic and reached to the riverways of Rus and to the south of the Don steppes. The patriarchs of Constantinople and of Rome found themselves, in the mid-eleventh century, exercising jurisdiction over vast missionary churches.<sup>8</sup> This jurisdiction had yet to be formulated clearly and much was left to the judgement, practices and example of clerics on the spot and to leading members of communities and polities that had received baptism. Among the latter were the Icelanders and kings like Olaf Tryggvasson of the Norwegians, Harald Bluetooth of the Danes, Mieszko of the Poles, Géza of the Hungarians and, most rumbustious of all, Vladimir of the Rus.<sup>9</sup> Given the dearth of priests and other persons duly ordained to perform religious offices, any more or less credible dispensers of the sacraments were liable to be accepted, from whichever quarter they might appear, east or west.

‘Wandering clerics’ and self-styled holy men were, from this perspective, making for Christian community and a willingness to overlook petty differences.<sup>10</sup> the forces of un-belief were still daunting. But by the same token, the development over time of ecclesiastical organization and more regular pastoral care from episcopal sees and monasteries made such ad hoc arrangements redundant and indeed undesirable. Moreover, with the tightening of bishops’ and other senior clerics’ supervision over missionary churches, there was – and is – a marked tendency to take at least as firm a line against practitioners of variant forms of Christianity as against outright un-believers. It is precisely in situations where good practice and ritual need to be formulated clearly and authoritatively that sectarian differences are likely to come to a head.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the drastic expansion of Christendom from around the mid-tenth century onwards, so superficially promising of ecclesiastical fellowship and collaboration, may itself constitute more of a storm cloud. As will be seen below, there were precedents for differences between Byzantine and other missionary churchmen heightening tensions and precipitating confrontations at the highest ecclesiastical level (p. 144).

One may now consider some other, more material, channels of communication between different parts of Europe and, indeed, the world beyond. The volume of maritime communications expanded greatly, with the interlinking of ‘three Circuits’ around most of Europe. Essentially commercial in origins, and interlacing with ever more microcircuits, they became nexuses of regular exchange from the mid-tenth century on (and not earlier). This is the case with all three of them: the Circuit running between Constantinople, Egypt and southern Italy; the waterway between Rus and Constantinople – ‘the Way from the Varangians to the Greeks’; and the sea-links connecting the Varangians’ homeland, Scandinavia, with North Sea and Atlantic settlements and markets. To claim that trade provided the pulse for communications along these routes is, I think, defensible, being consistent with the general proposition that ‘from the eleventh century on, commerce was the dynamic sector which ... became the motor of the Byzantine economy’.<sup>12</sup> One may note, by way of illustration of the Circuits,

David Jacoby's identification of the *Rum* mentioned in the Cairo Geniza documents as being mostly Byzantine, rather than western, Christians from the later tenth until around the mid-eleventh century;<sup>13</sup> the indications that silks – probably mainly of Byzantine origin and travelling via Rus – were in the possession of well-to-do townsfolk in England on the eve of the Norman Conquest, rather than being monopolized by elites;<sup>14</sup> and the pastoral work on Iceland of 'bishops from other lands' which so irked Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg in the mid-eleventh century, involving Armenians such as Peter, Abraham and Stephen and – around this time or within a generation – Greek speakers, too.<sup>15</sup>

No less significant than the development of these three water-powered Circuits was the intensification of communications from north to south across the Alps, our third general point. Of particular significance is the tightening imperial German supervision of northern Italy towards the mid-eleventh century. Henry III systematized appointments to sees, and over a quarter of his appointments to Italian bishoprics went to northern-born clergymen.<sup>16</sup> Henry, like his predecessors, visited Italy rarely, but this reflected confidence that he could manage at a distance, drawing upon Italian-born experts. One such was Kadeloh who served as his chancellor for Italy from 1037.<sup>17</sup> Undeniably, Rome's diverse elites posed problems but Henry showed ability to get his way there too, imposing a series of German-born popes that culminated with the Lotharingian Bruno in 1048. One mark of the relative ease of communications is that Bruno, like his immediate predecessors, retained the see he already held – Toul – upon becoming pope. And, after his metamorphosis into Leo IX, the pope's frequent journeying north of the Alps won praise from his friend Abbot John of Fécamp in Normandy: not content to stay in Rome or to 'irrigate only fruitful Italy with the showers of the heavenly word, he goes around the churches on this side of the Alps, investigating with synods'; whatever he finds amiss, he 'soon assails with ecclesiastical censure, and improves and corrects with the rule of law'.<sup>18</sup>

Leo IX's shuttling north and south and his application of discipline registers close cooperation with the emperor in ridding the Church and

monasteries of malpractices and deviation from canonical norms, a variant on the journeying of Chancellor Kadeloh. And yet, from the very start of his pontificate, Leo put out signals denoting radical change and, by implication, a new world order. Before illustrating these, it is worth considering another point, which also involves communications. That many westerners headed for Jerusalem from around 1000 onwards was remarked upon by contemporaries. ‘Crowds ... unheard-of in earlier ages’ were undertaking pilgrimages, according to Ralph Glaber.<sup>19</sup> Taken in isolation, Ralph’s statement may provoke scepticism. However, around this time King Stephen of Hungary was furthering the journeys of pilgrims and traders through construction work on the ‘Hungarian Way’.<sup>20</sup> Archival evidence in the form of wills from Catalonia indicates quite a steep rise in the number of pilgrims settling their affairs on the point of departure for the Holy Land. Four such wills survive from the first two decades of the century, as against six from the 1030s alone.<sup>21</sup> And Ralph’s remark that pilgrims came from all parts of the earth fits with Rus evidence of bands of folk wandering between ‘the holy places’ and the steppe frontier-zone by the 1030s and 1040s; by that time Scandinavians, too, were beginning to visit the Holy Land.<sup>22</sup> Another indication of the part Jerusalem now played in Latin Christians’ devotions is the numerous dedications of churches to the Holy Sepulchre in the first half of the eleventh century, many founded by pilgrims.<sup>23</sup> Western enthusiasm for the Holy Sepulchre differed in accent and terminology from easterners’ veneration of ‘the holy places’ and ‘the church of the *Anastasis*'.<sup>24</sup> But this era saw countless small cross-pendants (worn as talismans and objects of devotion)<sup>25</sup> and some cults of saints passing from east to west. The cult of St Clement, for example, seems to have moved from Cherson by way of Kiev to the court of the Danish king, and thence to what became St Clement Danes in London, and on to Oxford’s riverside quarter beyond the walls, still bearing his name today.<sup>26</sup> Soon afterwards, Count Fulk Nerra introduced the cult of St Nicholas to Angers on return from pilgrimage; the saint had saved him from shipwreck off Asia Minor, heeding his Byzantine shipmates’ prayers.<sup>27</sup>

The temptation to put a positive gloss on such circulation of cults is strong, and they may seem to foreshadow Christian commonality. One must, however, sound a warning note, and even invoke a little Theory. Fredrik Barth had in mind purportedly *ethnic* groups such as the Pathans when he wrote of the constant negotiations and accommodations needed to maintain ‘boundaries’, and the core values and customs constituting an identity.<sup>28</sup> But his concept of ‘boundary maintenance’, and of the agencies undertaking this at various levels – and not exclusively at the top – seems to work quite well for the first half of the eleventh century. At a time of unprecedented possibilities for exchanges of customs, cults and indeed texts, members of established hierarchies and proponents of existing identities might well have wished to make clear to their flocks or fellows where true authority and best practice lay. These dynamics of convergence and collision seem to me to warrant the description ‘weather systems’, with strong winds blowing north–south as well as east–west. It is the occasions of outright opposition that catch the historian’s eye or ear. But the pressures building up, and the interplay of tensions between authority-holders *inside* western Christendom, are no less significant for being elusive. I shall glance at three sets of phenomena suggestive of volatile weather systems, and then at a distant yet almost instant ‘echo’ of the thunderclap of 1054 – in Rus.

There was, I suggest, a link between the surge of pilgrims from all corners of Christendom and the rebuilding works undertaken at imperial expense, sometimes by Byzantine-trained craftsmen, at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Unease about the surge on the part of both leading powers in the region is implicit in the role given to ‘great multitudes’ of pilgrims and to fears of a Christian takeover in Ralph Glaber’s tale of Caliph al-Hakim’s destruction of the church in 1009,<sup>29</sup> and in the story that Basil II banned western pilgrimages for three years from 1019, fearing Norman infestation of the sort already experienced in southern Italy.<sup>30</sup> And both powers played a part in restoring the Holy Sepulchre. But, as contemporaries like Ralph Glaber noted, the Muslim authorities made amends quickly, the caliph’s own Christian mother sending money. And when Ralph writes of ‘multitudes’ travelling ‘from all over the world’ with gifts to restore ‘the house of God’ in

Jerusalem, it seems from the context that westerners were prominent.<sup>31</sup> By 1023 Patriarch Nikephoros of Jerusalem, acting on behalf of the Fatimid caliph, could inform the emperor that ‘the church of the Holy Resurrection’ and other churches were restored.<sup>32</sup> Only for some years later is there evidence of Byzantine diplomacy raising the issue of reconstruction. After protracted negotiations, the first team of craftsmen arrived at the Holy Sepulchre in, probably, the mid-1030s and works continued, off and on, until around 1048.<sup>33</sup> Sidestepping scholarly disputes over the rebuilding work’s precise chronology, one may note a singular feature of this work. Byzantine emperors probably only had limited responsibility, yet they managed to take full credit, making an impression on Jerusalem’s residents and foreign visitors alike.

One mark of the Byzantines’ impact is a Persian visitor’s belief that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was entirely Byzantine workmanship. Admiring its size in 1047, Naser-e Khosraw commented on the gold mosaics, and these typically Byzantine images will have fostered the impression of imperial responsibility for the whole church. Besides Old Testament figures and the Resurrection, the mosaics showed in the drum the original church’s builder, Constantine the Great, signalling continuity with the commissioner of the mosaics and his namesake, Constantine IX Monomachos.<sup>34</sup> Monomachos receives full credit for the reconstruction from William of Tyre, sidelining the emperor who had probably commissioned the Byzantine-type brickwork and ornament found in the church, Michael IV.<sup>35</sup> William, drawing upon local traditions a century later, credited Monomachos with other good works, notably the provision of Jerusalem’s Christians with their own walled quarter.<sup>36</sup> This reputation for imperial custodianship of Jerusalem accords with the independent evidence from *Enkainia*, the readings for feasts celebrating dedications of churches newly built or restored. These appear with explicit reference to the feast for the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre’s church in manuscripts from the eleventh century onwards. Such manuscripts became commoner than those whose headings mentioned St Sophia’s dedication, even though they still reflected the liturgical practice of Constantinople. This shift could register a decision

to commemorate rebuilding of ‘the Temple’ in Jerusalem at the command of a Solomon-like emperor.<sup>37</sup> The decision to ‘broadcast’ might well have been taken during the reign of Monomachos, who cultivated a Solomonic stance.

This fanfare of concern for Jerusalem and its inhabitants struck a number of notes, aligning the Constantinopolitan patriarch with a manifestly pious imperial enterprise, while also rallying the clergy and faithful of Antioch’s patriarchate, whose sees reached down into southern Syria.<sup>38</sup> The fanfare should also have struck a chord with influential monks interested in Palestinian monasteries, notably Lazaros of Mount Galesion, Monomachos’ contemporary. Gregory the Cellarer highlights the youthful Lazaros’ yearning for ‘the holy places of Christ’s passions’ and treats the arrival of monks from Jerusalem in western Asia Minor as more or less routine.<sup>39</sup> Pilgrims from newly converted peoples could also have responded to the mosaics’ display of imperial presence in Jerusalem. But perhaps another, more defensive, consideration was in play. It may be no coincidence that negotiations intensified and Byzantine reconstruction began in the 1030s, around the time that western pilgrims surged east, following Basil’s temporary ban. Realizing that the influx of westerners was unstoppable, the government may have sought to channel it in ways compatible with – even conducive to – imperial hegemony, representing the holy city as still beneath the *basileus*’ aegis, almost as in Constantine the Great’s day. Byzantium was quick to perceive the extraordinary martial qualities of the Normans, probably providing an escort to Jerusalem for Duke Robert in 1035, as it did for Fulk Nerra,<sup>40</sup> and enrolling many Normans in its army a decade or so later.<sup>41</sup> What better way of demonstrating shared faith and the emperor’s role as ‘lord protector’ than by making Jerusalem a showpiece of his authority? One might the more convincingly impute unchristian characteristics to anyone trying to appropriate his possessions, thereby shoring up the empire’s western approaches.<sup>42</sup>

Not that Constantine IX’s stance was one of unalloyed defensiveness. Seemingly around 1049, his forces tried to seize Malta, presumably in quest of a base for overseeing central Mediterranean affairs and for operations

against the Normans.<sup>43</sup> His spectacular custodianship of Jerusalem might well have earned more westerners' support for ambitious Byzantine countermeasures, if only the Malta venture had succeeded. These initiatives have a bearing on our second set of phenomena suggestive of volatile weather systems in the first half of the eleventh century. It seems to me that Emperor Henry II effectively 'cold-shouldered' the Byzantine world, aspiring to a locus of authority of his own, north of the Alps. The rarity of his visits to Italy was in reaction not only to the humiliations Otto III underwent in Rome, but also to the ways in which Byzantium appealed to its urban elites, almost as if they belonged to a more easterly weather system.

I shall merely outline this thesis, with an eye to fuller exegesis elsewhere. First, if Henry forbore from diplomatic contacts with Byzantium after an initial exchange and showed indifference to explicitly eastern artefacts, this was neither from ignorance nor from blocked communications. As already noted, the early eleventh century saw ever more east–west travel, and Henry's brother-in-law, Stephen of Hungary, was helping pilgrims across his land. Henry had personal experience of Rome and its citizens, leading German troops to the rescue of Otto III when they mobbed him in 1001 and urging him to quit the city.<sup>44</sup> And, unlike the first two Ottos, he recognized the futility of trying to bring Venice to heel and acquire its fleet. His tendency towards disengagement from Italian and papal affairs was at least partly in recognition of Byzantium's military and naval capability in the central Mediterranean. Henry's main intervention in Italy came only towards the end of his reign, after the failure of indirect methods of containing the Greeks, such as harbouring the Apulian rebel Melo, and in response to repeated pleas for help from the pope. His prime target in 1022 was the fortress of Troia in northern Apulia, a newly built symbol of Byzantine resurgence.<sup>45</sup> Henry's next stop was Monte Cassino, where he deposed the abbot, who had recently aligned himself with the *basileus*. It was, most probably, he who donated to the monastery a Gospel-Book, one of whose miniatures depicts the emperor as the epitome of piety, wisdom, justice and law, Byzantine-style.<sup>46</sup> Henry was reacting to Byzantium's ever

more conspicuous power after its subjugation of Bulgaria and to the prospect of the cradle of western monasticism entering its orbit, but informed wariness had characterized his stance towards Byzantium throughout his reign.

Distrust of local families dominating the Roman papacy and also of Byzantium underlay Henry's bid to devise a kind of a self-contained weather system north of the Alps. Well-educated and supremely pious, he urged his bishops to implement God's commands as Moses had done. Presenting himself as supreme conveyor of God's law, a kind of 'super-Moses', Henry – unlike his predecessors – called synods quite regularly in Germany. Attended mainly by bishops, they issued regulations on quite a broad range of topics, as if all Henry's realm were a church.<sup>47</sup> Thus a coherent ideology and ecclesiastical organization underpinned his regime. Yet they lacked a fixed focal point, and in his bid to create a recognizable locus of authority at Bamberg, a seat of Christian empire 'equal to Rome', Henry looked eastwards to that other imperial seat, on the Bosphorus. His self-identification with Constantine the Great was conventional enough, as also his emphasis on evangelization in justifying the new see of Bamberg, 'that the paganism of the Slavs may be destroyed'.<sup>48</sup> But Henry formalized his personal associations with his foundation to a remarkable extent, dedicating its cathedral on his birthday. He spent most subsequent birthdays there, as if celebrating the city's own birthday and matching Byzantine celebrations of Constantinople and its founder. In 1020, he even laid on an elaborate *adventus* for Benedict VIII, with a series of 'choirs' greeting the pope at various stages of his entry into Bamberg. Stefan Weinfurter, Henry's biographer, has seen in the *adventus* deliberate rivalry with the eastern empire.<sup>49</sup>

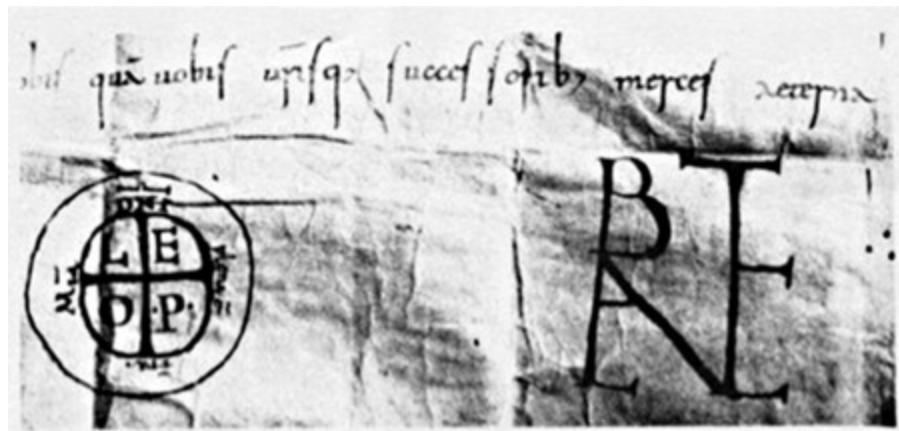
In themselves, these echoes of contemporary Byzantium in Henry's bid to create a sacral centre in his own realm may seem trivial, and his primary objective was probably to lessen his imperial crown's need for Roman papal validation and spiritual authority. Henry could now receive popes within his own *urbs regia* and, well-verses in theology, he presided over church synods as custodian of religious orthodoxy. It could have been merely in fulfilment

of this role that Henry insisted on the creed being chanted at his imperial coronation by Benedict VIII in Rome in 1014. But this was no ad hoc adaptation to align coronation procedure with the prayers customary back home. Henry saw it as his duty to ensure that the papacy used the same creed as the church north of the Alps had done since Charlemagne's time. Setting himself up as arbiter of orthodoxy, he got a synod to decree that the Roman churches must in future sing the creed during masses (replete with the *filioque* clause), prevailing over the Romans' objections that they had no need to demonstrate their orthodoxy.<sup>50</sup> At the very least, he was correcting the papacy where it seemed procedurally unsound. But Henry was, I suggest, also taking a sideswipe at Byzantium. If he lacked the capability to expel the *basileus* from southern Italy or exorcize his shade from Rome and Venice, the western emperor could show that he and the church under his wing had superior Christian credentials. Thus even – or *especially* – when cold-shouldering Byzantium and trying to reduce his reliance on papal validation, the German emperor was punctilious about hallmarks of religious orthodoxy, eager to brandish his proprietorship of them, and ready to impose 'quality control' as far south as Rome and Monte Cassino. Henry II was essaying a kind of cultural isolationism and yet, paradoxically, this had the consequence of aggravating the question of which weather system Rome belonged to, Byzantine or Latin Christian. No polemics ensued over the papacy's adoption of the *filioque* in its chanted profession of faith. But this seems to have cost the pope his place in the patriarchal diptychs in Constantinople.<sup>51</sup> The formula was now in place for a tempest, in the event that German commitment to Italy intensified. And such close engagement occurred in the 1030s and 1040s.

This forms part of our third weather system, one so volatile and fast-moving as to suggest climate change, and emanating from north of the Alps. Some now question the role of Lotharingian clergy in rethinking relations between churchmen and secular rulers, rejecting Lotharingian authorship for a text criticizing Henry III's appointment of a pope in 1046, *De ordinando pontifice*.<sup>52</sup> But the arguments remain in equipoise, if not tilting in favour of Lotharingia as a hotbed of radical thinking about monastic and ecclesiastical

order and law.<sup>53</sup> Here, it should suffice to recall how Henry III maintained close contact with Italian affairs through Chancellor Kadeloh and then his German-born popes; and that quintessential Lotharingian Leo IX's whirlwind of travel which John of Fécamp described admiringly. Ubiquity, in fact universality, characterized Leo's pontificate, seemingly the product of deliberate 'image-building'.<sup>54</sup> One such image, a storm signal if not a cloud, is worth considering here together with other features of Leo IX's pontificate that may be connected with it. The image takes the form of a cross inscribed within double circles together with Leo's name and 'P' for *pontifex*; around the circle runs the legend 'The earth is filled with the Mercy of the Lord' (from Psalm 33.5).<sup>55</sup> This device, known as a *rota* and serving as Leo IX's signature from the opening months of his pontificate, was an innovation (see [Figure 9.1](#)). Previous popes had used 'Bene Valete' preceded by a cross for authorization (see [Figure 9.2](#)).<sup>56</sup>

If Leo chose a new type of signature to express his authority, he presumably had his reasons, and J. Dahlhaus has expounded the *rota*'s



[Figure 9.1](#) Example of a charter from Pope Leo IX for Cluny (10 June 1049) showing his use of a *rota* [Original from Paris BN, Nouvelles Acquisitions Lat. 2327 No. 2; reproduced from J. von Pflugk-Harttung, (ed.), *Specimina Selecta Chartarum* (Stuttgart, 1885), 5.27, table 18.1; reproduced with permission from the Bodleian Library, Oxford]



*Figure 9.2* Example of a charter from Pope Clement II for Babenburg (24 September 1047) showing his authorization of the cross and ‘Bene valete’ [Original from Bamberger Ukr. 113 in the Munich Bayerisches Hauptstadtliches Archiv; reproduced from J. von Pflugk-Harttung, (ed.), *Specimina Selecta Chartarum* (Stuttgart, 1885), 5.27, table 16.2; reproduced with permission from the Bodleian Library, Oxford]

symbolism. The double circles represent the earth surrounded by the ocean, with the cross inside symbolizing the Lord’s mercy filling the earth. By inserting his name between the arms of the cross, Leo signals that he is Christ’s representative on earth.<sup>57</sup> Dahlhaus pointed out Leo’s special devotion to the cross, expressed, according to his *Vita*, by miniature crosses covering his body from birth!<sup>58</sup> Among the first things he did as pope was to transfer to Monte Cassino’s care Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, an ancient Roman monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross. Another mark of devotion was Leo’s donation to the Holy See of the convent of the Holy Cross inherited from his parents in Alsace, linking it with a papal liturgy celebrated each Lent in the Roman house of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.<sup>59</sup> The most insistent expression of veneration comes from the *rota*’s cross motif and legend themselves. The verse from Psalm 33 was prominent in the Roman Mass, beginning the Introit on the Second Sunday after Easter, when the Epistle speaks of Christ’s self-sacrifice on the cross and the Gospel of the Good Shepherd.<sup>60</sup> Through this citation, Leo associated himself both with Christ on the cross and with a feast celebrating His Resurrection. Now

known as ‘Misericordia Sunday’, this feast day has obvious associations with the Holy Sepulchre. Leo’s novel signature affirmed his unique continuance of Christ’s self-sacrifice, dispensing Goodness and Mercy across the world from the vantage-point of His cross and, even, its original terrestrial site, the city of Jerusalem.

Dahlhaus appreciated the radicalness of Leo’s *rota*, and raised – while leaving open – the question of whether his claim to be Christ’s representative on earth was directed against the king.<sup>61</sup> It seems likely enough that Leo was, in effect, gently clipping the wings of his partner and collaborator, Henry III, who fulfilled his own role of ‘vicar of Christ’ more systematically than any of his predecessors.<sup>62</sup> But might not the *rota* also have served as a riposte to the eastern emperor’s claims to represent Christ on earth, when Byzantine rebuilding and mosaic-work in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were nearing completion, if not newly finished? Leo may have been qualifying – wordlessly yet graphically – the *basileus*’ role of custodian of the Holy Sepulchre. As we have noted, Constantine IX was probably then broadcasting the rebuilding work through the feast for the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre celebrated in Constantinople.

To read these intentions into Leo IX’s *rota* is to presuppose diplomatic finesse and a keen eye for symbolism. But Leo was reputed by his *Vita* to be ‘shrewder than the shrewdest of men’.<sup>63</sup> Above all, this was the very time when clerical interest in precision as to what was legitimate authority and in the meaning of symbols was intensifying, climaxing in the clash between notions of papal and imperial authority. A profoundly radical text discussed the relationship of property with power, insisting that symbols and ritual themselves constitute legitimate power – authority. The author put a strict construction on the symbols of ring and staff, insisting that they meant only one thing, the pastoral care performed by a bishop and his access to ‘the secret wisdom of God’. They were liturgical apparatus, simultaneously symbolic and potent, their use in any context denoting pastoral office. So whoever – kings or emperors – used them to confer offices or property on bishops were claiming ‘all pastoral authority for themselves’.<sup>64</sup> The text – *Libri III. adversus simoniacos* – appeared three or four years after Leo’s

death, but vented concerns already in play during his lifetime. The author was one of his closest collaborators, Humbert, and anxiety about rites and symbols and about their meaning was shared, albeit more mutedly, by other members of Leo's entourage. For example, Halinard of Lyons had refused to swear an oath of loyalty (*fidei sacramentum*) amounting to homage to the king in 1046, even while remaining on close terms with him.<sup>65</sup> Himself a student of the liturgy, Leo innovated in synchronizing the start of his Roman synods with Eastertide feast days, especially the Second Sunday after Easter.<sup>66</sup>

These generalizations, based on a recent work by Charles West, concern mainly the bishops' ring and staff, and the liturgical interpretation of investiture;<sup>67</sup> but they bear both on Leo's *rota* and on his likely response to any tampering with the symbolic message of the Mass. They corroborate the view that Leo intended his *rota*, literally a form of validation, to be a signal of things to come, a kind of 'alternative universe' under papal direction. He still believed in the western emperor as a potential force for good, seeking to bolster Henry III's material power and looking to him for aid against the Normans in Italy in 1053.<sup>68</sup> Yet Leo's *rota* presented a radical agenda to anyone who could 'read' the symbolism, while the timing of his synods dovetailed neatly with his self-identification with Christ and quotation from an Eastertide Mass on the *rota*. Given such attention to symbols and liturgy, one might expect Leo to have reacted strongly against any impugning of the Mass, looking for refutation to the assistant who was probably already his chief exponent of symbolism as well as of Roman authority.

From this perspective, Leo IX's entrusting to Humbert of at least the initial rebuttal of Leo of Ohrid's letter denouncing Latin use of azymes for Communion is unsurprising.<sup>69</sup> The letter will have appeared to him, as it did to Humbert, an attack on the Eucharist at the Last Supper, which unleavened bread symbolized and indeed reified – and this at a time when Berengar of Tours' eucharistic teachings (denial of the Real Presence and Transubstantiation) had provoked disputations and councils.<sup>70</sup> It is tempting to view Pope Leo's stance as essentially defensive. But one should resist this temptation, and not just because of the vehemence of Humbert's writings

and his assertion of the ‘holy Roman and apostolic church’s’ headship ‘of all the churches after Jesus Christ’.<sup>71</sup> Leo took a very active interest in south-central and southern Italy, visiting Monte Cassino already in 1049 and, at his first Eastertide synod, specifying that its decrees on payment of tithes should now extend to Apulia.<sup>72</sup> Leo’s visits to the south were part and parcel of his attempts to cope with the depredations of the Normans. However, his stand seems to have rested on the ideological principles enunciated in Pseudo-Isidore’s decretals: that the papacy was invested by the Donation of Constantine with secular, as well as spiritual, authority in the west and it must strive for correct order there.<sup>73</sup> Leo’s dissatisfaction with the ecclesiastical status quo emerges clearly from his appointment of an ‘archbishop for preaching the Word of God to the Sicilians’ soon after himself becoming pope.<sup>74</sup> While Saracens were presumably envisaged as prime audience for this prelate, the appointment marked an assertion of papal authority over an area long within the Constantinopolitan patriarch’s jurisdiction. Moreover the choice for the post of a scholar conversant with written, albeit not spoken, Greek, implies that the island’s graecophone Christians would be among his flock, if and when Saracen rule ended. The appointee was none other than Humbert, who is listed fifth among attendees at the Roman synod of 1050, as ‘archbishop of Sicily’. He had apparently made the most of Moyenmoutier’s well-stocked library while a monk there, and had learnt Greek.<sup>75</sup> Neither the appointment of Humbert to be archbishop of Sicily nor the choice of Humbert as one of the leaders of the legation to Constantinople betokens comprehensive refutation of eastern Christian usages. Indeed, Humbert commended the forbearance of Byzantine laymen from ‘any disposal of churches or of ecclesiastical ordinations’ in his *Libri III. adversus simoniacos*. He cited what he had ‘heard and seen’ in the imperial capital, above all what he had ‘learned from the mouth of the emperor of orthodox memory, Constantine Monomachus’.<sup>76</sup> He even devoted a chapter to purportedly showing ‘how much freer is the church of the Greeks than [that] of the Latins from the power of laymen’.<sup>77</sup> From this perspective, of Byzantium as supposedly

exemplary imperial–ecclesiastical order, there was all the more need to correct ‘the manifold errors’ with which, as he noted in his treatise, ‘the churches of the Constantinopolitan empire are vexed’.<sup>78</sup> This was the outlook of Humbert in the mid-1050s and, probably, earlier still, when he could envisage preaching to the Sicilians.

Humbert’s learning of Greek and ambitious notional assignment of ‘preaching the Word of God to the Sicilians’ (in the words of his admirer and acquaintance Lanfranc) was a variant of many forms of encounter between Latin Christians and the eastern empire and its culture in the mid-eleventh century. As noted earlier, these were on the rise, and ranged from the throngs of pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre, where the mosaics with a pronounced imperial theme were on show, to Constantine IX’s countermeasures against the Normans, involving an expedition to retake Malta and the recruitment of many Normans into his army (p. 132–4). Indeed, an influx of western warriors seems to have been under way, and by c.1050 the Norman Hervé was holding a senior command and sporting the title of *hypatos* on his seal, perhaps also the image of St Peter.<sup>79</sup> The influx may well have something to do with the favour Argyros (son of the rebel Melo and himself a former collaborator with the Normans) found with Constantine IX. He had access to the palace, and was able to dispense largesse and accumulate a following in the capital, attested by a surviving *tessera* assigned to one beneficiary. He was in 1051 assigned to southern Italy as *doux* of the entire region.<sup>80</sup> Argyros, a practitioner of Latin rites and patron of Farfa, was also esteemed in papal circles, judging by the *Vita* of Leo IX.<sup>81</sup> Argyros was singularly well-qualified to serve a government under military pressure; this probably accounts for its departure from the usual practice of appointing only adherents of eastern religious orthodoxy to top provincial commands, while reserving them for non-locals. Argyros was not the only cultured westerner at large in Constantinople, judging by the fact that the romance ‘Barlaam and Joasaph’ was translated there in 1048/9.<sup>82</sup> The mid-eleventh century would seem, then, to have been an era when cultural pooling between Byzantium and the Latin west coincided with a

quest, at least in the west, for more sharply defined terminology and symbolism in matters of law, authority and worship.

This brings us back to the volatile weather systems mentioned earlier (p. 132). Following Barth, one might expect *a priori* a time of unprecedented possibilities for travel, exchanges, acquisitions and mergers to throw up instances of attempts at ‘boundary maintenance’ or, indeed, boundary extension, in reaction to the blurring of barriers. The eastern emperors’ show of solicitousness for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem might fit this theory, alongside Leo IX’s *rota* and appointment of an ‘archbishop of Sicily’. So, too, might the fact that Argyros, virtually the embodiment of the blurring of culturo-religious identities, became a *bête noire* in some quarters in Constantinople. Rather than speculating further on Argyros’ activities during his spell there between 1045 and 1051 or attempting to survey all the variants of spirituality and monastic discipline in play in Byzantium around that time, we shall merely note three points.

First, Argyros was the object of particular loathing by Michael Kerouarios, who on his own avowal often debated with him in Constantinople, ‘most of all about azymes’. Complaining that Argyros ‘never forgot his own form of worship ... and was ever ill-disposed towards Romania’, he refused him Communion repeatedly. The location of the refusal could have been St Sophia, or a church in the Great Palace.<sup>83</sup> Kerouarios may have been prompted as much by pious conviction as by political considerations: Argyros, although winning plaudits for his initiative in leading ‘some Franks and Greeks’ out from the city walls against Leo Tornikios’ besieging army in 1047,<sup>84</sup> had yet to receive a top command. At any rate, after Argyros’ posting to Italy, Kerouarios sought to impugn his integrity and impair his role as go-between with the papacy and other powers in the region.<sup>85</sup>

Second, the first half of the eleventh century saw currents of rigorous asceticism and reformulations of correct discipline and modes of devotion running through Byzantine monastic circles and sectors of the higher clergy. Whether they were sufficiently concerted to constitute a ‘movement’ is questionable. But it is worth noting the vigour with which two ascetic

thinkers put forth distinctive yet congruent views in their writings: one enjoining monks to partake often of Holy Communion in his monastery; the other propounding the special benefits of hardship and suffering for refinement of one's soul and imitation of Christ. The former writer is Paul, who founded what became the highly influential monastery of Theotokos Evergetis, just outside Constantinople's walls, between 1049 and 1054. Salient among his spiritual concerns were, besides fasts and self-denial, liturgical symbolism and 'a distinctly more "sacramental" life than that found in other monasteries'.<sup>86</sup> The latter writer is the cleric Leo, whose treatise of fifty maxims, the *Kephalaia*, may date from after his installation as archbishop of Ohrid in 1037.<sup>87</sup> There is no firm evidence that Leo knew of, or drew upon, Paul's *Sylloge* or other works.<sup>88</sup> But it is striking that, while both drew on common streams of asceticism, Leo was enjoining monastic ideals about what was good for the soul to the secular world. He seems to have been addressing laymen, rather than just monks.<sup>89</sup> What has been called the 'missionary zeal' of Leo<sup>90</sup> cannot have been lost on Kerouarios in commissioning him to write his first letter concerning the Latins' use of azymes and other errors between mid-1052 and early 1053. It may well have been a positive recommendation.<sup>91</sup>

Our third point follows directly from this: Kerouarios shows every sign of wanting the letter not only to reach the pope, but also to circulate widely among churchmen in the west.<sup>92</sup> But in getting a proxy, Leo of Ohrid, to write the letter for delivery to the pope through intermediaries and to focus on azymes, Kerouarios left himself some room for manoeuvre. The papal curia, for its part, had no doubt as to who was behind the démarche. Its first riposte addresses both Leo of Ohrid and the patriarch.<sup>93</sup> Yet Kerouarios at first showed consistent disinclination openly to impugn the Roman see. As Judith Ryder has observed, he denied 'writing any letter to the pope or any other western bishop', and he was even prepared to cite the similarity between Argyros' ideas on azymes and the contents of the letters delivered by the papal legates in 1054 as evidence of the letters' inauthenticity.<sup>94</sup> This can scarcely be other than disingenuousness on Kerouarios' part.<sup>95</sup> He

seems to have disapproved profoundly of azymes, as taken in Communion by Argyros and by the many other Latins now frequenting the capital. His instigation of Leo of Ohrid's letter could well represent calculation intermingled with religious conviction, vicariously raising the issue of certain rites of the Latins with an eye to discouraging their practice in Constantinople, at least, and awaiting reactions in political and ecclesiastical circles there.

Without speculating further on this, let alone on the kind of responses Kerouarios may have expected from westerners, one may on the one hand cite his wish, conveyed to Peter of Antioch, that he had never set eyes upon the Bull of Excommunication and that it had been burnt,<sup>96</sup> a possible indication that the degree and absoluteness of the papal reaction directly against himself came as a shock. On the other hand, Kerouarios may have connived with, if not instigated, other démarches against Latin practices, undertaken by proxies and outriders with the potential to gain a momentum that not even the emperor could halt.<sup>97</sup> Leo of Ohrid was not the only senior churchman in an outlying ecclesiastical province to inveigh against azymes and other Latin practices in the mid-1050s. From this perspective, our thunderclap, the Bull of Excommunication 'detonated' by the legates in St Sophia on 16 July 1054, is surprising for its speed and scale, rather than for its occurrence.

It is worth glancing at a text composed by another outlying senior churchman, the metropolitan of Rus, Ephraim. He apparently delivered it by word of mouth at a synod (*homegyris*) there, perhaps soon after taking up office around 1055. If, as is most likely, he was the 'Ephraim *protoproedros* and metropolitan of *Rhosias*' known from a seal, he will have arrived with a singularly high-ranking title; one may suppose that he enjoyed the confidence of the patriarch, and perhaps his patronage. Ephraim and his text have received little attention from scholars, with Professor Cheynet an eminent exception.<sup>98</sup> Ephraim's list of Latin errors in ritual, church discipline and eating habits resembles the other lists flowing from Byzantine clerical pens from the mid-1050s onwards.<sup>99</sup> So one might rank it among the scattergun abuse that writers aligned with the patriarch were levelling at western

churchmen. However, the text is no mere echo of Leo of Ohrid's letter or Kerouarios' own writings from 1054. It vents ire against the Germans (*Nemitzioi*), blaming them for imposing azymes (and other customs) on 'the Romans' (i.e. the papacy)<sup>100</sup> and taking exception to their socio-political order, the king's appointment of archbishops and sending them into battle: 'they are ignorant of what is the work of priests, what of civilians, and what of professional soldiers'.<sup>101</sup> Ephraim also criticizes the fasting periods of the Poles in Lent: they are faulty, as are the diverse fasting periods of the Italians and others.<sup>102</sup> He was thus catering for a local, Rus audience likely to be familiar with German traders and with Poles. Although mentioning points at issue in 1054 – the *filioque* and azymes – he describes a scene that shifted very soon afterwards. After Henry III's death in 1056 there was no king to 'impose on the Romans [i.e. the papacy] what he wishes'.<sup>103</sup>

Whether drawing on what he had heard or read in Constantinople, or what he had picked up on arriving in Rus, or a combination of the two, Ephraim seems to string together variegated allegations in circulation, and he avows ignorance on points that had, perhaps, come to the fore again only recently: whence the Latins derived their addition of the *filioque* to the creed 'I do not know'.<sup>104</sup> It seems to me that Ephraim expressed repugnance that resonated with various strata, mainly but not exclusively clerical, in Byzantium and Rus, in the face of western mores and political culture alongside differences over modes of worship. The thunderclap of 1054 prompted articulation of this sense of real difference, but did not create it.

One might dismiss Ephraim's text as a curio, since few Rus would have understood the Greek in which he wrote and delivered it, and no translation is known. But his was, in fact, the opening shot in a tirade of tracts denouncing Latin usages composed or translated in Rus within a generation of 1054, starting with the 'Dialogue with a Latin' of Metropolitan George, who was in post by c.1062 and was probably Ephraim's successor.<sup>105</sup> The denunciations sometimes occur in passing, while the author addresses specifically Rus issues, and this apparent casualness has broader implications. Rus was a missionary church, and in Metropolitan John II's set of answers to questions, the issue of Latins using azymes mingles with

sacrifices to ‘devils’ in wild places and polygamy, conduct ‘far from present-day piety or the decorous order of the Roman polity’.<sup>106</sup> Coping with pagan cults and marriage practices was scarcely a novelty for Byzantine missionaries. But alternative rites and statements presented as dogma by priests styling themselves ‘Christians’ was another matter. Questions arose as to which rules were correct and with whom true religion, and authority, resided. It is no accident that differences between Latin and eastern rites and the interrelationship between Rome and Constantinople had last come to a head when a newly converted ruler sought clarity as to what was permissible in religious rites. That ruler was Boris of Bulgaria in the 860s.<sup>107</sup>

Rus princes were not so punctilious as Boris, and the situation in Rus was more an irritant than cause for confrontation. But by around 1050, things were different: the Circuits had generated constant intermingling, commercial, social and religious, and Armenian bishops were afoot in Iceland. It was the better to deal with such a plethora of rites and practices that Archbishop Adalbert sought from Leo IX extension and clarification of his missionary jurisdiction and subsequently even the creation of a new patriarchate of the north.<sup>108</sup> Familiar figures – popes, emperors, patriarchs – might negotiate and seek realignments, even ‘reunion’. But they were ultimately powerless to halt the formation of overlapping weather systems, of which the Circuits themselves were examples. The emergence of, in effect, two huge and ultimately rival missionary churches was another. Given the sharper demarcation of conceptual and devotional boundaries under way in east and west, collision of some sort was more than likely. It is hardly a coincidence that two of the authors of the first, trenchant, polemics between eastern and western Christians had comparably austere and implacable concerns, reflecting new trends of thought and feeling in their respective ‘systems’. Humbert and Leo were, respectively, a leading proponent of the need for precision and consistency in the use of symbols and liturgical ritual, and a stern advocate of liturgical correctness and quasi-monastic asceticism to be observed by all. The thunderclap of 1054 vented one of a series of pressures that were mounting inexorably between these weather systems.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Usage of the term ‘long eleventh century’ can vary even with the same author, but it conveys the sense of significant ‘overspill’ into the decades of the preceding and subsequent centuries; see e.g. J. Gillingham, ‘Thegns and Knights in the Eleventh-Century England: Who was Then the Gentleman?’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995), 129–53, at 129; T. O’Donnell, M. Townend and E.M. Tyler, ‘European Literature and Eleventh-Century England’, in C.A. Leeds (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2013), 607–36, at 607; J. Shepard, ‘History as Propaganda, Proto-Foundation Myth and “Tract for the Times” in the Long Eleventh Century (c.1000–c.1130)’, in T. Jackson (ed.), *Old Rus’ and Medieval Europe: The Origin of States* (Moscow, 2016), pp. 332–55.
- <sup>2</sup> D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500–1453* (London, 1971); C. Raffensberger, ‘Revisiting the Idea of the Byzantine Commonwealth’, *BF* 28 (2004), 159–74. On the Investiture Contest, see M. C. Miller, ‘The Crisis in the Investiture Crisis Narrative’, *History Compass* 7 (2009), 1570–1580; special issue, dedicated to ‘La réforme grégorienne’, of *Revue d’Histoire de l’Église de France* 96 (no. 236) (2010).
- <sup>3</sup> See e.g. J.-C. Cheynet, ‘Le schisme de 1054: un non-événement?’, in C. Carozzi and H. Taviani-Carozzi (eds), *Faire l’événement au Moyen Âge* (Aix-en-Provence, 2007), 299–311; J. Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives on 1054’, *BMGS* 35 (2011), 20–37; T.M. Kolbaba, ‘On the Closing of the Churches and the Rebaptism of Latins: Greek Perfidy or Latin Slander?’, *BMGS* 29 (2005), 39–51; T.M. Kolbaba, ‘1054 Revisited: Response to Ryder’, *BMGS* 35 (2011), 38–44.
- <sup>4</sup> Although subject to many refinements and attempts at rebuttal, the thesis of B. Stock that what amounts to the long eleventh century marks a cultural turning point has yet to be superseded: *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ, 1983), esp. 88–91, 259, 271–315, 522–7. See also pp. 138–9.
- <sup>5</sup> The study of epigraphy promises enlightenment in this field. See, e.g., I. Toth, ‘Epigraphic Traditions in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: General Considerations’, in A. Rhoby (ed.), *Inscriptions in Byzantium and Beyond: Methods – Projects – Case Studies* (Vienna, 2015), 203–25, esp. 206–11, 214–16, 220–1. For the use of epigraphic sources, see also Chapter 7 by Tim Greenwood in the present volume.

[6](#) J. Shepard, ‘Convergence and Collision in Eleventh-Century Christendom: Some Repercussions of the Christianisation of Rus on East–West Relations’, in J. Arnason, S. Bagge and B. Wittrock (eds), *The Formation of the Great Civilizations: Contrasts and Parallels* (Uppsala, forthcoming). For Barth’s thesis on boundaries and identity, see n. 28.

[7](#) *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, K. Wessel and M. Restle (eds), vol. VII. under Ohrid cols 202–18 (esp. 216–17) (G. Fingarova); 252–75 (esp. 267–75) (B. Schellewald); J. Shepard, ‘Communications across the Bulgarian Lands: Samuel’s Poisoned Chalice for Basil II and his Successors?’, in V. Gjuzelev and G.N. Nikolov (eds), *South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of 10th – the Beginning of the 11th Centuries: History and Culture* (Sofia, 2015), 229–31.

[8](#) See, e.g. Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 156–9, 178, 198–201; contributions to A. Vauchez, J.-H. Mayeur, L. Pietri and M. Venard (eds), *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610–1054)* (Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours 4) (Paris, 1993); N. Berend, ‘Introduction’, in N. Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus’*, c.900–1200 (Cambridge, 2007), 18–19; W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, intro. G. Garnett (London, 2003), 125–6, 150–1; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford, 1998), 443–59.

[9](#) Berend, ‘Introduction’, 12, 14–15, 20–7, 35. See also the chapters in this book devoted to individual peoples.

[10](#) I.H. Garipzanov, ‘Wandering Clerics and Mixed Rituals in the Early Christian North, c.1000–c.1150’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63 (2012); J. Shepard, ‘From the Bosporus to the British Isles: The Way from the Greeks to the Varangians’, *Drevneishie Gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy 2009 god* (Moscow, 2010), 26–9.

[11](#) Shepard, ‘Convergence and Collision’.

[12](#) A.E. Laiou and C. Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge, 2007), 136.

[13](#) D. Jacoby, ‘Byzantine Trade with Egypt from the Mid-Tenth Century to the Fourth Crusade’, *Thesaurismata* 30 (2000), 25–77, esp. 27–38, 43–7.

[14](#) The cuts and styles of clothing resembled types known from Scandinavia, implying commerce and shared sartorial fashion: R. Fleming, ‘Status Symbols and Silks’, *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007), 36–7; Shepard, ‘From the Bosporus’, 40. These indications would fit with, for example, the stray finds of *folleis* in Schleswig-Holstein, a transit route for de luxe goods from the Byzantine world

and likely site for loss or disposal of worthless coppers: R. Wiechmann, ‘Haithabu und sein Hinterland: ein lokaler numismatischer Raum? Münzen und Münzfunde aus Haithabu (bis zum Jahre 2002)’, *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu* 36 (Das archäologische Fundmaterial VIII) (Neumünster, 2007), 196–7, 202–3, 232–3, 236.

15 For Adalbert’s strictures on bishops who ‘gave easier commands’ than the duly instituted bishop, Ísleif, see *Origines Islandicae*, ed. and tr. G. Vigfusson and F. York Powell, I (Oxford, 1905), 429; Garipzanov, ‘Wandering Clerics’, 3–4. Adalbert’s ban was ineffectual, judging by the regulations for the pastoral work of ‘Armenian or Greek’ bishops and priests in the early twelfth-century lawcode known as ‘Grey Goose’: tr. A. Dennis, E Foote and R.M. Perkind, *Laws of Early Iceland: Grágás. The Codex Regius of Grágás with Material from Other MSS*, I (Winnipeg, 1980, repr. 2006), 38.

16 T. Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c.800–1056* (London, 1991), 270.

17 W. Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation im Mittelalter*, II (Hanover, 2003), 856–8, 896–906, 976. See also, on Italian prelates, abbots and others frequenting Henry’s court in quest of diplomas, *ibid.*, 838–9.

18 Abbot John of Fécamp to Leo IX, *Epistola*, PL.143.797; F. Schmieder, ‘Peripherie und Zentrum Europas: Der nordalpine Raum in der Politik Papst Leos IX.’, in B. Flug, M. Matheus and A. Rehberg (eds), *Kurie und Region: Festschrift für Brigide Schwarz zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 2005), 359 and n. 1, 365–6.

19 Ralph Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, IV.18; IV.21, ed. and tr. J. France (Oxford, 1989), 198–9, 204–5.

20 D. Denecke, ‘Straße und Weg im Mittelalter als Lebensraum und Vermittler zwischen entfernten Orten’, in B. Hermann (ed.), *Mensch und Umwelt* (Stuttgart, 1986), 212.

21 N. Jaspert, ‘Das Heilige Grab, das Wahre Kreuz, Jerusalem und das Heilige Land’, in T. Pratsch (ed.), *Konflikt und Bewältigung: Die Zerstörung der Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem im Jahre 1009* (Berlin and Boston, 2011), 75.

22 For Feodosii’s encounter with ‘wanderers’ near Kursk: Nestor, *Zhitie Feodosiia Pecherskogo*, ed. O.V. Tvorogov, *Biblioteka Literatury Drevnei Rus*, I (St Petersburg, 1997), 356–9; tr. M. Heppell, *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 28. For Harald Hardraada’s reported visit to the Holy Land, see Snorri Sturluson, *Haralds Saga*, ch. 12, in *Heimskringla*, ed. B.

Adalbjarnason, III (Reykjavik, 1951), 83–4; tr. M. Magnusson and H. Pálsson, *King Harald's Saga* (Harmondsworth, 1966), 59–60. D. Föller suggests that Harald and his men escorted Byzantine craftsmen to the Holy Sepulchre: ‘Wikinger als Pilger’, in Pratsch (ed.), *Konflikt und Bewältigung*, 294–7.

<sup>23</sup> J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997), 32–3.

<sup>24</sup> For instances of eastern Christian usage, see n. 39.

<sup>25</sup> The controversial question of where these crosses were made – Scandinavia, Rus, the periphery of Byzantium, or all three options – is of less concern to us than the fact of their circulation and use by some individuals in all these regions in the tenth and eleventh centuries. See J. Staeker, *Rex regum et dominus dominorum: Die wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission in Altdänemark und Schweden* (Stockholm, 1999), 110–15, map 15 on 111; 127–34, map 21 on 128; I. Jansson, ‘Situationen i Norden och Osteuropa för 1000 år sedan’, in M. Janson (ed.), *Från Bysans till Norden* (Skellefteå, 2005), 69–70 and figs 12, 13, 70–7. See also Garipzanov, ‘Wandering Clerics’, 5–10.

<sup>26</sup> For the likeliest route whereby Clement’s cult reached northern Europe and gained altars in England, see B.E. Crawford, *The Churches Dedicated to St Clement in Medieval England: A Hagio-Geography of the Seafarer’s Saint in 11th Century North Europe* (St Petersburg, 2008), 18–29, 35–6, 58–68, 86–91, 203–5.

<sup>27</sup> For Fulk’s promotion of the cult, see *Miracula Sancti Nicholai*, ed. Y. Mailfert, ‘Fondation du monastère bénédictin de Saint-Nicolas d’Angers’, *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes* 92 (1931), 55, 60 (text), 45–6 (introduction); B.S. Bachrach, ‘The Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra, Count of the Angevins’, in T.F.X. Noble and J.J. Contreni (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1987), 206 and n. 9 on 214; B.S. Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra, the Neo-Roman Consul, 987–1040* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), 151, 165–6.

<sup>28</sup> F. Barth, ‘Pathan Identity and its Maintenance’ in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (repr. Long Grove, IL, 1998), 117–34, esp. 119–23, 131–4; F. Barth, ‘Introduction’, 15–19, 24–8, 32–5, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ralph Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, III.24, ed. and tr. France, 132–5. Al-Hakim’s reported fears and mood swings are not wholly inconsistent with the interest his government was taking in the precise timing of the Eastertide descent of Holy Fire at the Holy Sepulchre a few years earlier, in 1000, according to Biruni (*Chronologie*, tr. in M. Canard, ‘La destruction de l’Église de la

Résurrection par le Calife Hâkim et l'histoire de la descente du feu sacré', *Byz* 35 (1965), 36–7). At this time al-Hakim may have seen in the regular appearance of the Fire a filipp to the pilgrimage trade and thereby to his own revenues: B. Krönung, 'Al-Hakîm und die Zerstörung der Grabeskirche', in Pratsch (ed.), *Konflikt und Bewältigung*, 139–40 (tr. of Biruni), 141.

<sup>30</sup> Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, III.55, ed. P. Bourgain-Hemeryck, R. Landes and G. Pon (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 129) (Turnhout, 1999), 175. Al-Hakim's decree in 1013, allowing all Christians and Jews to leave for Byzantine territory, could be a further reflection of unease about the circulation and presence of aliens in his dominions: Yahya of Antioch, *Histoire*, ed. and tr. I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, II, (PO 23) (Paris, 1932), 519; Krönung, 'Al-Hakîm', 154.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, III.25, ed. and tr. France, 136–7.

<sup>32</sup> Yahya of Antioch, *Histoire*, ed. and tr. I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, III (PO 47) (Turnhout, 1997), 468–9.

<sup>33</sup> Yahya of Antioch, *Histoire*, ed. and tr. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev, III, 532–5; John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, *CFHB* 5 (Berlin, 1973), 388; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, tr. E.A. Wallis Budge, I (Oxford, 1932), 196.

<sup>34</sup> Nâser-e Khosraw, *Book of Travels (Safarnâma)*, tr. W.M. Thackston, Jr (Albany, NY, 1986), 37–8; R. Ousterhout, 'Rebuilding the Temple: Constantine Monomachos and the Holy Sepulchre', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 48 (1989), 70–4, 78; R. Ousterhout, 'New Temples and New Solomons: The Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture', in P. Magdalino and R.S. Nelson (eds), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2010), 249–50; M. Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Stroud, 1999), 79–80.

<sup>35</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, I.6, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 63), I.6 (Turnhout, 1986), 113. For the brickwork, and the problem of precisely attributing the church's components to builders, see Ousterhout, 'Rebuilding the Temple', 72–4, 76–7; Ousterhout, 'New Temples', 250; Biddle, *Tomb of Christ*, 77–80; D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, III (Cambridge, 2007), 11–13.

<sup>36</sup> William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, IX.17–18, ed. Huygens, 443–4.

<sup>37</sup> Ousterhout, 'New Temples', 250–1, referring to S.G. Engberg's *Profetie-Anagnosmata-Prophetologion* (in preparation).

- 38 On the undercurrents of resentment among Antioch's clergy and citizens at the appointment and consecration in Constantinople of non-locals as their patriarchs from Basil II's time onwards, see K.-P. Todt, 'Zwischen Kaiser und ökumenischem Patriarchen: die Rolle der griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchen von Antiocheia in den politischen und kirchlichen Auseinandersetzungen des 11.–13. Jh. in Byzanz', in M. Grünbart, L. Rickelt and M.M. Vučetić (eds), *Zwei Sonnen am Goldenen Horn? Kaiserliche und patriarchale Macht im byzantinischen Mittelalter, Teilband 1.* (Byzantinistische Studien und Texte 3) (Berlin, 2011), 157–60. The patriarchate's most important sees in the south, e.g. Damascus and Homs, were still operational in the eleventh century: K.-P. Todt, 'Griechisch-Orthodoxe (Melkitische) Christen im zentralen und südlichen Syrien', *Le Muséon* 119 (2006), 65–73, 84.
- 39 Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros of Mt Galesion*, chs 4, 6, 84, ed. H. Delehaye (*Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, III) (Brussels, 1910), 510, 535; tr. and comm. R.P.H. Greenfield, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt Galesion: An Eleventh-Century Pillar Saint* (Washington, DC, 2000), 80, 82, 173–4. On the ties between Lazaros and Monomachos' court, see R. Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* (Cambridge, 1995), 104–6, 139.
- 40 *Gesta consulum Andegavorum*, L. Halphen and R. Poupartdin (eds), *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou* (Paris, 1913), 50; Ralph Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, IV.20, ed. and tr. France, 202–4; William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, VI.12(13), ed. and tr. E.M.C. van Houts (Oxford, 1995), II, 82–5. The scepticism about the historicity of Robert meeting up with Fulk Nerra expressed by Louis Halphen [*Le comté d'Anjou au XIe siècle* (repr. Geneva, 1974), 215–16] seems unwarranted, as B. Bachrach demonstrated: 'Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra', 208–10.
- 41 J. Shepard, 'The Uses of the Franks in Eleventh-Century Byzantium', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1993), 285–7.
- 42 The impact of the Byzantine building works and ornamentation at the Holy Sepulchre is suggested by the design of the church of San Stefano in Bologna, which may date from well before the First Crusade: B. Kühnel, 'Productive Destruction: The Holy Sepulchre after 1009', in Pratsch (ed.), *Konflikt und Bewältigung*, 37–8, 40–4. On Leo of Ohrid's construction of St Sophia in the 1030s–40s, as a show of eastern Christian strength, see Shepard, 'Communications across the Bulgarian Lands', 230, and pp. 128–9, n. 7.
- 43 Al-Qazwini, in M. Amari (ed.), *Biblioteca Arabo-Sicula*, I (Leipzig, 1857), 142–3; tr. in T.S. Brown, 'Byzantine Malta: A Discussion of the Sources', in A.T. Luttrell (ed.), *Medieval Malta: Studies on*

*Malta before the Knights* (London, 1975), 84–5; *ODB*, II (Oxford, 1991), 1277 (T.S. Brown).

<sup>44</sup> *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, I.114, MGH Scriptores 7 (Hanover, 1846), 451; S. Weinfurter, *Heinrich II. (1002–1024): Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten* (Regensburg, 1999), 36.

<sup>45</sup> J.-M. Martin and G. Noyé, ‘Les villes de l’Italie byzantine (IXe–XIe siècle)’, in V. Kravari, J. Lefort and C. Morrisson (eds), *Hommes et richesses dans l’Empire byzantin*, II, VIIIe–XVe siècle (Paris, 1991), 36, 40–1, 44–6, 48–9 and fig. 7 (plan); J.-M. Martin, *La Pouille du VIe au XIIe siècle* (Collection de l’École de Rome 179) (Rome, 1993), 259–63; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 245–9.

<sup>46</sup> Leo Marsicanus, *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, ed. H. Hoffmann, MGH Scriptores 34 (Hanover, 1980), 245–9; H. Keller, ‘Das Bildnis Kaiser Heinrichs im Regensburger Evangeliar aus Montecassino’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996), 178–9, 188–94, 208–10, 214 and fig. 4 (proposing Henry III as the miniature’s emperor); Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 247–8 and fig. 14 on 142 (rejecting Keller’s identification).

<sup>47</sup> H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet und in Reichsitalien von 916 bis 1056* (Paderborn, 1988), 221–7, 237–40, 247, 276–9, 300–5, 312; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 91–2, 163, 165–6, 201–2.

<sup>48</sup> MGH Diplomata Henrici, II, no. 143, MHG Diplomata (Hanover, 1900–3), 170; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 261–2.

<sup>49</sup> Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 243–4, 267–8. On *adventus* ceremonies in general in the Ottonian era, see D.A. Warner, ‘Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian *Reich*: The Ceremony of *Adventus*’, *Speculum* 76 (2001), 255–83, esp. 270–2.

<sup>50</sup> For the issue of the creed, see S. Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955), 41–3. Berno of Reichenau, who witnessed the coronation, commented on Henry’s insistence on the sung creed, winning over Pope Benedict and the Roman clergy: *De officio missae*, PL.142.1060–1; Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.*, 240 and n. 106 on 321; Wolter, *Die Synoden*, 264–5.

<sup>51</sup> That Sergius IV was the first pope to add the *filioque* to the profession in his systatic letter to the patriarch of Constantinople is proposed by A. Bayer, *Spaltung der Christenheit: das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054* (Cologne, 2002), 36–41, drawing on seemingly independent, but late, Greek sources. Whether long-standing disagreements between Rome and Constantinople over their respective jurisdictions in southern Italy (Beyer, *Spaltung*, 42–3) could account for this act of defiance is open to question. Given Berno of Reichenau’s eyewitness account of the reluctance of the Roman clergy, and of Benedict VIII himself, to alter the mass by adding the sung

creed in 1014, one may doubt whether he, or his predecessor, would already have innovated substantively in their respective systematic letters sent to Constantinople: Berno of Reichenau, *De officio missae*, cols 1060–1. On Sergius IV, see *Encyclopedie dei papi*, II (Rome, 2000), 129 (A. Sennis).

[52](#) For the text, see H.H. Anton, *Der sogenannte Traktat ‘De ordinando pontifice’* (Bonn, 1982), 75–83, esp. 76, 80–3.

[53](#) A review of the controversy, and strong advocacy of the authorship of Adelman of Liège, *magister scholarum* at Speyer, is provided by W. Ziegulewicz, ‘Les déplacements du pape Léon IX’, in G. Bischoff and B.-M. Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps* (Turnhout, 2006), 457–69, esp. 458–9, 460–2, 467–8.

[54](#) Schmieder, ‘Peripherie und Zentrum Europas’, 359–69, esp. 366–8; Ziegulewicz, ‘Déplacements’, 464–6; G. Gresser, *Die Synoden und Konzilien in der Zeit des Reformpapsttums in Deutschland und Italien von Leo IX. Bis Calixt II. 1049–1123* (Paderborn, 2006), 11–12.

[55](#) The verse reads in full: ‘He loveth righteousness and judgement: the earth is filled with the Mercy of the Lord’.

[56](#) J. Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung der Rota in den Urkunden des Papstes Leo IX.’, *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 27 (1989), 9, 26–30

[57](#) Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung’, 30, 60.

[58](#) *Vita Leonis*, I.2, ed. and tr. H.-G. Krause, D. Jasper and V. Lukas, *Die Touler Vita Leos IX.* (Hanover, 2007), 92–3; Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung’, 49.

[59](#) Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung’, 51–3.

[60](#) Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung’, 41–2, 48.

[61](#) Dahlhaus, ‘Aufkommen und Bedeutung’, 60. The significance of the *rota* as part of a new visual *Sinnbild* for papal authority received recognition from, for example, H. Seibert, ‘Das Papsttum und die monastisch-kanonikale Reformbewegung’, in J. Jarnut and M. Wemhoff (eds), *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung?* (Mittelalterliche Studien 13) (Munich, 2006), 14.

[62](#) S. Weinfurter, *The Salian Century*, tr. B.M. Bowlus (Philadelphia, PA, 1999), 97, 100–1.

[63](#) *Vita Leonis*, I.15, ed. and tr. H.-G. Krause, D. Jasper and V. Lukas, 138–9.

[64](#) Humbert, *Libri III. adversus simoniacos*, III.6, MGH Libelli de lite imperatorum saeculis XI. et XII. Conscripti 1 (Hanover, 1891), 205. See discussion in C. West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution:*

*Political and Social Transformation between Marne and Moselle, c.800–c.1100* (Cambridge, 2013), 215–16.

65 Humbert's concern about the misappropriation of symbols by lay persons is clear in, for example, *Libri III. adversus simoniacos*, III.6, 205; III.15, 217. On the symbolism of the staff and ring and the fact that kings only began to bestow a ring (together with a staff) on newly appointed prelates in the eleventh century, see P. Depreux, 'Investitura per anulum et baculum ...', in Jarnut and Wemhoff (eds), *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung?*, 169–95, esp. 182–4, 187–92, 193–4; P. Depreux, 'Investitures et rapports de pouvoirs ...', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France* 96 (2010), 56–9, 61–4. Halinard archbishop-elect of Lyons' refusal even to pretend to swear such an oath to Henry III is recounted in *Chronique de l'abbaye de S. Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. E. Bougaud and J. Garnier, *Analecta Divionensis* (Dijon, 1875), 189; see M. Parisse, 'L'entourage de Léon IX', in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 444, 445; West, *Reframing*, 214.

66 Dahlhaus, 'Aufkommen und Bedeutung', 42–4, 47–8; Gresser, *Die Synoden*, 13–15 (highlighting the 'universal character' intended for the first synod, which began on 'Misericordia Sunday', 1049). Another form of Leo's solemnization of universal papal dominion through liturgical acts was his incessant consecration of churches: D. Iogna-Prat, 'Léon IX, pape consécrateur', in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 360–3, 374–8.

67 West, *Reframing*, 216–19.

68 J. Gay, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire byzantin depuis l'avènement de Basile Ier jusqu'à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867–1071)* (Paris, 1904), 486–7; Ziezulewicz, 'Les déplacements', 462, 466.

69 The text of Leo of Ohrid's letter, intended for 'all the archbishops of the Franks and the most revered pope' has received a valuable re-edition (with German translation) from E. Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon von Ohrid (1037–1056). Leben und Werk ...* (Bamberg, 2007), 180–92, here at 180.5–6. See, on this letter, Runciman, *Eastern Schism*, 54; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 64–7. Humbert is most likely to have had prime responsibility both for the Latin translation of Leo of Ohrid's letter and for the first, lengthy, letter drafted in the pope's name and addressed to Kerouarios and Leo: *Acta et scripta quae de controversiis ecclesiae graecae et latinae saeculo undecimo composita extant*, ed. C. Will (Leipzig and Marburg, 1861), 61–4 (translation), 65–85 (letter). Controversy continues about the precise attribution of these and the texts subsequently issued for the papal curia: see, e.g. Runciman, *Eastern Schism*, 55–7; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 84–5; Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 58; Ryder, 'Changing Perspectives', 22–3. What is scarcely questionable is that these texts had Leo's approval;

that the first letter addressed to Kerouarios carried the message of church unity under active papal primacy; or that this letter drew on *De ordinando pontifice*: A. Noblese-Rocher, ‘Une source ecclésiologique de la lettre *In terra pax hominibus* de Léon IX’, in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 205–16, esp. 211–13.

<sup>70</sup> J. de Montclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger* (Louvain, 1971), 103–6, 119–23, 149–61. Humbert was charged by a later pope, Nicholas II, with drafting the profession of faith that Berengar was required to make. This states that the consecrated bread and wine is ‘the blood and body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that physically, not only in sacrament but in truth, they are handled by the hands of priests, broken and crushed by the teeth of the faithful’: ed. R.B.C. Huygens, ‘Bérenger de Tours, Lanfranc et Bernold de Constance’, *Sacris Erudiri* 16 (1965), 373. Cowdrey remarks on the ‘uncompromisingly, indeed somewhat crudely, realistic terms’ in which Humbert couched Christ’s Presence in the Eucharist: H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk and Archbishop* (Oxford, 2003), 63. Humbert’s views on the Real Presence may well have been formed before 1053/54.

<sup>71</sup> Humbert, *De sancta Romana ecclesia* (fragment A), ed. P.E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio*, II (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929), 128. This text, only two fragments of which survive, seems to have been composed around the time of the composition of the first letter addressed to Kerouarios on behalf of Leo IX: *ibid.*, 125 (introduction).

<sup>72</sup> *Vita Leonis IX*, II.10, ed. and tr. Krause, 194; Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 477–81, 496–7; Gresser, *Synoden*, 14, 22 and n. 63; Ziezulewicz, ‘Les déplacements’, 465.

<sup>73</sup> Ziezulewicz, ‘Les déplacements’, 466. On the intensive recourse of Leo’s chancery officials alongside Humbert to canon law as formulated in Pseudo-Isidore, see C. Munier, ‘Le pape Léon IX et le droit canonique de son temps’, in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 391–3, 401–2. The implications of Leo’s acquisition of suzerainty over Benevento in 1051 were noted by Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 483; H. Taviani-Carozzi, ‘Léon IX et les Normands d’Italie du Sud’, in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 321–3.

<sup>74</sup> Lanfranc of Bec, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ch. 2, *PL*.150.409–510; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 54, n. 50; Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, 40.

<sup>75</sup> The list is published in *MHG SS*, IV (Hanover, 1841), 507; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 54–5 and n. 50. For the obscurity of Humbert’s origins beyond the fact of his stint at Moyenmoutier, see Parisse, ‘L’entourage de Léon IX’, 438–9. Lanfranc was almost certainly present at the synod in Rome: Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, 40. He would have learnt of Humbert’s preaching mission on this occasion.

76 Humbert, *Libri III. adversus simoniacos*, III.8, 206–7.

77 Ibid., III.10, 210–11.

78 Ibid., III.8, 206.

79 Shepard, ‘Uses of the Franks’, 285–8; W. Seibt, ‘Übernahm der französische Normanne Hervé das Kommando über die verbliebene Ostarmee?’, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 10 (2010), 92.

80 V. von Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1967), 58–60, 93–4; J.-C. Cheynet, ‘La politique byzantine de Léon IX’, in Bischoff and Tock (eds), *Léon IX et son temps*, 263–4; ‘Argyros 10101’, M. Jeffreys (ed.), *Prosopography of the Byzantine World* (2011) available at <http://pbw.kcl.ac.uk> (accessed 26 February 2013) [henceforth *PBW*].

81 *Vita Leonis IX*, II.20, ed. and tr. H.-G. Krause, D. Jasper and V. Lukas, 226–7; Cheynet, ‘La politique byzantine’, 263.

82 P. Peeters, ‘La première traduction latine de “Baarlam et Joasaph” et son original grec’, *AnBoll* 49 (1931), 276–81; P. Magdalino, *The Byzantine Background to the First Crusade* (Toronto, 1996), 22, n. 73.

83 *Acta et concilia*, ed. Will, 177A.30–5; 175A.8–12; Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 471, n. 1; ‘Michael 11’, *PBW*.

84 *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*, in L.-A. Muratori, ed., *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, V (Milan, 1724), 151. See also Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. Thurn, 440.

85 See, e.g., Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 471, 497–9; Runciman, *Eastern Schism*, 53, 57–8 and n. 31; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 70–1; Cheynet, ‘La politique byzantine’, 263; Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives’, 32.

86 R.H. Jordan and R. Morris, *The Hypotyposis of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople (Eleventh–Twelfth Centuries)* (Farnham, 2012), 25, 45, 56–7, 87, 135 (intro.); 155–7 and n. 59 (*Hypotyposis*’ precepts on Holy Liturgy in translation).

87 What amounts to an *editio princeps* is provided by J.A. Munitiz, ‘Leo of Ohrid: the New *Kephalaia*’, *OCP* 76 (2010), 133–44 with English tr., 124–33. This is a corrected version of the text in Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 78–101 (text and German tr.); 153, 155 (problems of dating the *Kephalaia*). See also ‘Leon 108’, *PBW*.

[88](#) Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 153. On currents of spiritual thought and ideas about symbolism and sacraments in mid-eleventh century Byzantium, see elsewhere in this volume.

[89](#) Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 150–5; Munitiz, ‘Leo of Ohrid’, 122.

[90](#) Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 153.

[91](#) That Kerouarios prompted Leo to write the letter is not in serious doubt: Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 495; Runciman, *Eastern Schism*, 54; Bayer, *Spaltung*, 66–7; Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 31, 49–51, 194. See also Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives’, 31.

[92](#) Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 180–1 (text), 42–3 (intro.), 194–6 (commentary).

[93](#) *Acta et concilia*, ed. Will, 65; Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 49–50.

[94](#) *Acta et concilia*, ed. Will, 179A.27–180A.2; 177A.22–32; Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives’, 36, n. 72; 34.

[95](#) Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives’, 36.

[96](#) *Acta et concilia*, ed. Will, 186A.33–5; Ryder, ‘Changing Perspectives’, 36, n. 72.

[97](#) On Constantine IX’s position, which was more accommodating of the papacy, if not of Latin ways, see Gay, *L’Italie méridionale*, 471, 491, 496; Runciman, *Eastern Schism*, 60, 62–5, 98, 101–2; Cheynet, ‘La politique byzantine’, 263, 269–70; Büttner, *Erzbischof Leon*, 59–60.

[98](#) I. Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat des Kiever Metropoliten Ephraim’, *FM* 10 (1998), 319–53: text at 343–5, discussion of likely date and context on 332, 334–5, 341–3; V. Laurent (ed.), *Le corpus des sceaux de l’empire byzantin*, V, *L’église*, I (Paris, 1963), no. 783; Cheynet, ‘Le schisme de 1054’, 309–10. On the date of Ephraim’s installation, see G. Podskal’sky, *Khristianstvo i bogoslovskaya literatura v Kievskoi Rus (988–1237gg.)* (St Petersburg, 1996), 451 (A. Poppe).

[99](#) Without attempting detailed comparison here, one may note that Ephraim’s list includes all the issues categorized as ‘found in virtually all lists’ by T.M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Urbana, IL, 2000), 34–43.

[100](#) Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat’, 343 (point 2).

[101](#) Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat’, 343 (point 3).

[102](#) Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat’, 345 (point 28).

[103](#) Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat’, 343 (point 3).

104 Čičurov, ‘Ein antilateinischer Traktat’, 343 (point 1).

105 One text, perhaps attributable to Abbot Feodosii of the Kievan Cave-Monastery, lists numerous errors of the Latins and treats their ‘faith’ (*vera*) alongside ‘the Saracen or the Armenian’ faiths: ‘Slovo sviatogo Feodosiia igumena ... o vere krest’ianskoi i o latynskoi’: ed. in I.P. Eremin, ‘Literaturnoe nasledie Feodosiia Pecherskogo’, *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoi Literatury* 5 (1947), 171. Eremin’s case for attributing it to Feodosii (*ibid.*, 161–3) received endorsement from A.B. Barmin, *Polemika i skhizma: Istorija greko-latinskikh sporov IX–XII vekov* (Moscow, 2006), 222–35. See, however, Podskal’sky, *Khristianstvo*, 294–6. The attribution of a work entitled *Stiazanie s Latinoiu* to a contemporary of Feodosii, Metropolitan George (c.1062–76), is not in serious doubt: ed. in V.N. Beneshevich, *Drevneslavianskaia Kormchaia XIV titulov bez tolkovani*, *Trudy V.N. Beneshevicha*, ed. Y.N. Shchapov, II (Sofia, 1987), 276–80; Podskal’sky, *Khristianstvo*, 282–5. Another text, answering questions about church discipline and laypersons’ Christian living, some concerning contacts with Latins, was convincingly attributed to George by A.A. Turilov, ‘Otveti Georgiia, mitropolita Kievskogo, na voprosy igumena Germana: drevneishee russkoe “Voproshanie”, in B.N. Floriia et al. (eds), *Slavianskii mir mezhdu Rimom i Konstantinopolem* (Moscow, 2004), 212 and n. 12 on 227, 218–20 (intro.); 240–1, 250–1 (text).

106 ‘Otveti mitropolita Ioanna II’, ed. V.N. Beneshevich, *Sbornik pamiatnikov po istorii tserkovnogo prava*, I (Petrograd, 1915), 114, 110, 109 (points 15, 6, 4). John also wrote a letter in criticism of Latin practices, addressing it to the Antipope Clement III: edn of both Greek and Slavonic versions in A.S. Pavlov, *Kriticheskie opyty po istorii drevneyehei greko-russkoi polemiki protiv latinian* (St Petersburg, 1878), 169–86. On John and his works, see Podskal’sky, *Khristianstvo*, 285–91, 304–6, 451–2 (A. Poppe)

107 This is the case even while other issues of jurisdiction and church governance were in play. For Boris’ questions to Pope Nicholas I, see MGH *Epistolae* 6 (Berlin, 1925), 568–600. See also, e.g. R.E. Sullivan, ‘Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria: A Case Study of the Impact of Christianity on a Barbarian Society’, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 3 (1966), 55–139; Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 84–93; P. Riché, ‘Le christianisme dans l’Occident carolingien’, in A. Vauchez, J.-H. Mayeur, L. Pietri and M. Venard, *Évêques, moines et empereurs*, 712–13; C. Hannick, ‘Les nouvelles chrétientés du monde byzantine: Russes, Bulgares, Serbes’, *ibid.*, 925–7.

108 Leo IX, *Epistolae et decreta pontificia*, PL.143.701–3; P. Jaffé (ed.), *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, I (Leipzig, 1885), no. 4290 (3258); G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to*

*the Early Twelfth Century*, tr. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1993), 34, 200; Weinfurter, *Salian Century*, 127, 129.

## 10

### Urbane Warriors

#### Smoothing out tensions between soldiers and civilians in Attaleiates' encomium to Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates

*Dimitris Krallis*

Discussing the end of Nikephoros Botaneiates' rebellion in the spring of 1078 the judge, courtier, and historian Michael Attaleiates notes: 'Everything was accomplished without bloodshed or destruction, without even so much as a nosebleed, which is a definitive and fitting sign of his faith in God and of his appointment by Him.'<sup>1</sup> That a resident of Constantinople would include this emphasis on the bloodless nature of the coup in an encomium to his imperial patron should not be surprising to readers of the *History*. In his earlier account of the rebellion by Leon Tornikios, Attaleiates notes that the rebel had stayed his hand at the moment when the capture of the capital and the collapse of Monomachos' regime were imminent, in consideration of the possible civilian casualties attending a forced entry into Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> In fact the *History* notes that prior to Tornikios' surprising philanthropic decision,

the population of the city was in flight, rushing to and fro in disorder, some seeking refuge in the churches and sanctuaries, calling upon God's help, while others hurried in tears to the houses of

their relatives. Others were exhorting everyone to return to the fight, telling them what terrible things would happen if the city were taken. Nor did women stay out of this confusing rush.<sup>3</sup>

The capture of urban centres was a messy and bloody affair that in periods of civil strife invariably heightened tensions between the empire's city-dwellers and its, more often than not, non-autochthonous let alone Roman soldiery.<sup>4</sup> Palpable as fear and suspicion of soldiers may have been, there is nevertheless evidence of an attempt in the eleventh century to conceive of the successful military commander and potential military emperor as attuned to urbane sensitivities, a person with a keen ear for the concerns and aspirations of the empire's urban population.

The broader question of the interaction between the empire's military and civilian elites has, to some extent, already been addressed in Byzantine scholarship. In 1990, Jean-Claude Cheynet's *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance* took a nearly mortal stab at one of the holy cows of Byzantine studies.<sup>5</sup> In his meticulous study and in work that followed it Cheynet convincingly argued that the alliances, marriages and personal associations that populate our sources, both textual and sigillographic, outline a complex political world where military commanders and high-ranking pen-pushers inhabited overlapping social spheres, frequently intermarried and more often than not collaborated. Consequently, the clash between the civilian and military parties so eloquently articulated by that prototypical 'civilian' writer, Michael Psellos, can no longer be invoked without careful assessment of a much more complex social landscape.<sup>6</sup> In fact, a sensitive study of Psellos' own views of the empire's military predicament indicates that he was no uncritical supporter of a civilian party, decisive as his support for the Doukai and expressed dislike of the martial Romanos Diogenes may appear to the reader of the *Chronographia*.<sup>7</sup>

Here I explore this image further by introducing evidence from the *History* by Attaleiates; a civilian author with more readily acknowledged sympathies for the empire's military caste.<sup>8</sup> This chapter does not set up Attaleiates as a supporter of any one political faction or party, be it civilian, military, familial or other. It rather examines a peculiar segment of his

writings (the long encomium to Botaneiates contained in the *History*) and ponders its significance for our understanding of the relationship between soldiers and the empire's civilian population. Attaleiates' work is therefore shown to reflect on tensions within the Byzantine body politic that on occasion found an expression in political writing.

Furthermore, Attaleiates' account, produced as it was with an eye to public delivery, speaks to the type of political ideology current in Constantinople, and one could argue in the rest of the empire, in the years before the advent of the Komnenoi. This ideology is, I posit, inflected by a noticeably republican reading of the empire's politics.<sup>9</sup> What we see then in Attaleiates' work is the deployment of quasi-republican language for the conceptualization of a politics that bridges the gulf between city dwellers on the one hand and the empire's less than urbane soldiery and warrior elite on the other.<sup>10</sup>

The student of the eleventh century will know that the judge of the hippodrome and the *velum* Michael Attaleiates wrote a rather long *History* of the years from roughly 1035 to 1080.<sup>11</sup> This text, composed in stages during the 1070s and likely completed sometime around 1080, is split in two parts of unequal size.<sup>12</sup> The first, longest part – roughly two-thirds of the whole – follows the conventions of history writing, focused on the deeds of significant political agents – mainly emperors.<sup>13</sup> The second shorter but in no way concise part is an outwardly enthusiastic though not necessarily sincere encomium to Nikephoros Botaneiates.<sup>14</sup> The protagonists in this paper are Emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates, his father Michael and, in a cameo appearance, the rebel Nikephoros Bryennios. They all figure rather prominently in the aforementioned encomium. Of the three men mentioned here, Botaneiates did not later avoid history's opprobrium, Attaleiates' encomium notwithstanding.<sup>15</sup>

We begin with two vignettes from the life of Botaneiates' father, Michael. We then turn sequentially to Botaneiates' own rebellion, competing moves by Nikephoros Bryennios, Botaneiates' rise to the throne, and aspects of his reign. These are preceded by genealogy, always a central ingredient of any

encomium.<sup>16</sup> In his account of Michael Botaneiates' career Attaleiates focuses, among other things, on his military prowess and his role in the defence of Thessalonike from the Bulgarians. In a passage that echoes the blood, gore and heroism on display in Theodosios the Deacon's tenth-century narration of Nikephoros Phokas' Cretan expedition,<sup>17</sup>

Michael filled that entire battlefield with the bodies of the slain, as no one struck by his hand was able to avert death. The foes kept coming against him in serried phalanxes, attempting to pierce his body from all sides with the tips of their swords, but none managed to unseat him from his horse, for he cut through their spears and pikes with his sword, throwing his enemies to the ground. Some lost their head and arm to a single one of his blows, others he cut in half, and some he cut into pieces, destroying and terrorizing them with a huge variety of wounds. But the Bulgarians, whose innumerable host could not be reduced to a mere number, surrounded him like the waters of a boundless sea and strove to drown him and drag him to the bottomless abyss, the blows from their spears and other weapons of war continuously assailing him like waves.<sup>18</sup>

After hours of fighting Michael defeats the Bulgarians, a feat that appears to have been achieved single-handedly given the absence of references to his fellow soldiers in the account. This exploit was, however,

so great that when he saw after this victory the mass of the dead and the number of those in flight, he realized that he had performed a superhuman deed, was struck by dizziness, and, proving that he possessed a vulnerable nature, sensitive to human pain and suffering, he suddenly collapsed from his horse to the ground, bowing his head, drenched and bathed in the abundant blood of the enemy which was running in rivers, and no less covered in his own martyrial bloody gore.<sup>19</sup>

Attaleiates has constructed here the portrait of an epic hero: an individual who stands above all the rest, with might that surpasses that of regular humans. At this point, however, Botaneiates must exit the realm of heroes and be reintegrated into the Byzantine polity:

The people of Thessalonike celebrated more than anyone else the deliverance of their city, making thanksgiving offerings to God and to the great martyr Demetrios, and they also prayed and sang victory hymns for the glory and fame of the servant of God, Michael Botaneiates, for his God-like battles. And the city that had been saved by his hand eagerly sought its champion and organized a diligent search which, after covering much ground, found him lying in full armour and manly demeanour, clutching his sword with his fingers and utterly unwilling to part with it. His hand was able to release the sword only after much tending and application of skill, for his nails had dug into his palm in his mad attack against the enemy. Escorted by a retinue and with the loudest acclamations, cheers, the ululations of his guards, and adorned with words of praise as an

unparalleled hero, he processed in triumph to the city, having recovered from his dizziness, and filled the land of the Romans with joy and mirth.<sup>20</sup>

With this image the hero, who fainted after realizing the effects he had had on the human landscape around him, rejoins the world of civilians. In Attaleiates' account the *city* seeks its hero and organizes a search party to find him among the myriad bodies of dead Bulgarians. The people of Thessalonike (τὸ δὲ γένος τῶν Θετταλῶν) tend to Michael Botaneiates' clenched hand and release the sword before he can be escorted in the midst of a celebrating throng back into Thessalonike.<sup>21</sup> What follows is a triumphal entry for which we have no detailed description. It is nevertheless clear that the people here are no mere observers. They seek the warrior in the body-strewn battlefield and prepare him for the victory procession of which they are a part.

Attaleiates then shifts gears and moves to a field of operations in Asia, where Botaneiates fights the Abasgians. Once his military exploits are discussed, however, Michael Botaneiates returns to Constantinople, where his success as a warrior is yet again set in civilian context. At this moment the *History* notes:

Did this man, who enjoyed such repute and success, was admired and celebrated by everyone,<sup>22</sup> and exalted by the greatness of his feats, think highly of himself on account of his achievements and act arrogantly toward ordinary people? Did he address the residents of the City and treat them as if they were vulgar market types and unarmed civilians, without courtesy or respect? Or did he, like those who are held fast by the vice of vainglory, exalt his own person and emphasize his special status with boasts, as many soldiers like to do? Not at all!<sup>23</sup>

This passage suggests ways in which relationships could be imagined in the eleventh century between the empire's warrior elite and the population of Constantinople. First the reader stumbles upon what seems to be a form of Byzantine truism, namely that greatness of feats, repute and success would inevitably affect one's character, kindling that person's arrogance vis-à-vis 'ordinary people'.<sup>24</sup> Were we to ask, who those 'ordinary people' are, the answer is close at hand: Attaleiates explains that it is 'the residents of the city' that he has in mind. He then notes the ways in which warriors like

Botaneiates belittled these men by seeing in them nothing but an undifferentiated mass of ‘vulgar market types and unarmed civilians’.

Attaleiates’ language and writing in general set up a number of distinctions. On the one hand we have the successful military man – an extraordinary creature, as evidenced by the *History*’s account of his deeds before Thessalonike’s walls – on the other the people of Constantinople. By explaining that Botaneiates did not treat the Constantinopolitans as ‘vulgar market types’ and ‘unarmed civilians’, Attaleiates asserts Constantinopolitan, or better civilian identity as distinct from and certainly superior to that of the market rabble. He also signals to his apparently civilian audience that Botaneiates does not represent a danger to them.

And yet, the sheer emphasis on Botaneiates’ proper treatment of unarmed civilians speaks to a broader problem in the interaction between soldiers and civilians in the Byzantine world in general. Attaleiates explains to his readers what one should expect from proper soldier-civilian interaction in the following passage:

No one ever saw Michael Botaneiates behave arrogantly towards another citizen, look down his nose at anyone, remain aloof from the normal company and gatherings of the citizens, or lack urbanity, a noble bearing, a calm demeanour, and the gracious smile that was part of his nature. Thus he was regarded by all people as a great marvel, worthy of adoration, for inasmuch as he was invincible, spirited, and stunning in his momentum when it came to military contests, so much more was he pleasant, gentle, and affectionate towards the people of Byzantium in times of leisure, when he was, as they say, ‘off duty’, and spent time in the Imperial City. He liked urbane conversation, made friends with those who had a sense of humour, and thought it unworthy to be addressed by any name other than the one he derived from the City. It is for this reason that he was exceedingly loved by everyone and was both called and known to be a benefit for all, a feast of all good things and an object of universal praise, an incomparable soldier and inimitable citizen.<sup>25</sup>

Here Attaleiates adds definition to Michael Botaneiates’ portrait. The proper civilian engages with his peers and partakes in their ‘normal company and gatherings’. He shows noble bearing, calm demeanour – no doubt to be contrasted to the fury of the warrior – and displays a gracious smile. In times of leisure he is ‘pleasant, gentle, and affectionate’ towards the citizens of the capital, making friends with people who displayed a sense of humour ( $\tauοὺς \alphaστεῖζομένους$ ) and desiring to be called a Constantinopolitan.<sup>26</sup>

Attaleiates' portrait outlines Byzantine expectations of urban life. The sobriety of military life had to be acknowledged, as civil and respectful, but also light-hearted engagement with others is also assumed. The city is no longer the place of the vulgar market types, the urban rabble of many a Byzantine source, but a meeting-space of polite, well-meaning citizens displaying a sense of humour.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Attaleiates' urbane exchange is not incompatible with what others in the eleventh century, men of Psellos' circle for example, appreciated about life in Constantinople. Cities are not in Attaleiates' mind defined by commercial transactions, but rather by the peculiar form of sociability they engendered.<sup>28</sup>

The *History* is an account of the actions, successful or not, of great men, and as a consequence focuses extensively on warfare.<sup>29</sup> Attaleiates, however, knew fully well that an individual's path to power did not run solely across battlefields and campaign tracks. The empire's cities and Constantinople in particular mattered and consequently humour-inflected conversation, respectful interactions between civilians and lively citizens' assemblies become an essential part of the *History*'s portrayal of Byzantine politics.

Next we move forward half a century from the days of Michael Botaneiates to the years of his son's rebellion and march towards the throne in Constantinople. Early on in its account of Botaneiates' rebellion, the *History* offers a by now familiar amalgam of a portrait:

He was, in fact, most fearsome to behold and at the same time extremely pleasant, with his impressive height, obvious strength, and his joyous and shining countenance. His face glowed with a pure rosy colour, his eyes were full of charm, the pure black on their outside underlining the ineffable beauty that shone from the inside. His eyebrows soared like arches above them in the same, true black, colour. As for the forehead, it appeared to emit sparkling light, while the remaining features of the face were equal in beauty, crowning him like a second, earthly sun. That is what it was like to behold him, in fact he was superior to my description of him. In speech he was so graceful, pleasant, and skilful, that his utterances sounded like the song of the Sirens, drawing everyone in to pay attention and making people forget their homes and desire only to listen to him. Thus from the first encounter almost all were moved passionately by the emperor.<sup>30</sup>

The hero was fearsome and yet pleasant, impressively tall and obviously strong. Eyes full of charm, arched eyebrows, and luminous forehead all complemented speech that was graceful, pleasant, and skilful in utterances.

In what is an interesting juxtaposition of the private and the public spheres Attaleiates notes that people desired to listen to Botaneiates and, as if enchanted by the song of Sirens, left the confines of the *oikos* to hear him speak in public. If Botaneiates' genealogy and reputation for bravery and wealth made him a contender for the throne, it was his ability to interact with people in a civilian setting that caused the latter to be 'moved passionately'. This special sociability of the members of the Botaneiates family also appears somewhat later in the *History* when Attaleiates notes that

those who knew [Nikephoros], being exceedingly well acquainted with his exceeding daring and courage as well as his goodness, generosity, gentleness, conversational skill, urbanity and grace, they were first-hand witnesses of his character.<sup>31</sup>

Like his father, Nikephoros was the ideal urbane gentleman, generous, gentle and conversationally skilled. As a consequence people desired him and

setting aside all fear of the emperor who then reigned in Byzantium, the punishments that would be paid in blood and property, and the reprisals against their closest relatives, fearing neither the travails of the journey nor the multitude of Turks who held the rural areas and watched the roads, ... defected to him on a daily basis, a thing that people would not have believed before it actually happened.<sup>32</sup>

As in the earlier instance of Michael Botaneiates' heroics before Thessalonike, the actions and character of a member of the Botaneiates line stirred the civilian component of the empire's population to seek the military man in the field. Significantly, the body politic engaged in profoundly political and risky behaviour as it sought to unite itself with the imperial contender. Such behaviour required the transcendence of the family imperative of the Kazhdanian *Homo byzantinus* and the conceptualization of shared public interests that find their expression in the person of the *History*'s praised hero.<sup>33</sup>

Emphasizing the idea of risky political behaviour, Attaleiates explains that even those who remained in Constantinople did not show less courage in their actions. The *History* notes that on January 7, 1078,

while the emperor was at the Blachernai palace on Sunday, presiding and holding court as the entire senate was in attendance, those who were attending church in the great temple of God's Wisdom threw off all fear of the emperor and, imagining themselves in a state of democracy – for longing can convince one to attempt the impossible – they declared Botaneiates emperor in a loud voice.<sup>34</sup>

Here Attaleiates further develops the idea of a special relationship between Botaneiates and the citizens of Constantinople. Earlier on we saw how both Michael and Nikephoros Botaneiates were appreciated on account of their urbane sociability and for not treating the people with the disdain normally reserved for market types and civilians. This earlier statement with its emphasis on humour, polite conversation and the culture of the market place could be read as an attempt on the part of the author to transcend any imagined distinction between urbane sociability and market culture. On this present instance, however, the people who imagined themselves in a state of democratic self-rule ( $\delta\eta\mu\kappa\rho\tau\omega\mu\acute{e}n\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\acute{n}\varsigma\ o\iota\eta\theta\acute{e}n\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ ) congregated in Hagia Sophia and declared their allegiance to the urbane Botaneiates. For a moment, however, it appeared as if the city was divided. The familiar contrast between polite conversation and market hustle and bustle fades here before a new divide: on the one hand the Hagia Sophia crowd called for the rebel while on the other the senate stood by Michael Doukas at the Blachernai palace.

Once again, however, Attaleiates bridges the apparent divide in the *History* when he notes that

the leading men in the City and all who belonged to the Roman race divided themselves into political subunits as though marshalled by the hand of God, and spontaneously appointed their regimental commanders.<sup>35</sup>

That the population of Constantinople had a recognized right legitimately to constitute itself into a political assembly that could depose and replace those emperors who failed to fulfil their mandate as servants of the Romans has already been established by Attaleiates in his account of the rebellion of 1042, which I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> As in the case of the 1042 uprising, popular action is here given a positive spin, 'the leading men of the City and all those who belonged to the Roman race' acting as though marshalled by

the hand of God.<sup>37</sup> The reader of Attaleiates' account may get the impression that the author treats this moment of popular self-government as a nearly utopian and quasi-impossible state of existence that only comes into being because of the great hope generated in people's souls by Botaneiates' rise.

And yet, *attempting the impossible* may have in fact been a form of calculated risk taken by a discerning populace operating within a broadly accepted set of ideals. In the twelfth century Nikephoros Bryennios penned the account of an imperial council presided over by Michael VII. In this meeting Alexios Komnenos advocates the dispatch of axe-bearing guards against the same unarmed pro-Botaneiates populace discussed above.<sup>38</sup> Likely scoring a point against Alexios, Nikephoros notes that Emperor Michael VII could not countenance such a measure, out of 'cowardice or excessive virtue'.<sup>39</sup> That the emperor's failure to defend himself by attacking people whom a court apologist would easily have cast as a mob can be read as 'excessive virtue' is telling. Seven centuries after Theodosios' slaughter of the Thessalonicans and the attendant rebuke of that emperor by the bishop of Milan Ambrose – an event discussed by Attaleiates in the *History* – the unleashing of soldiers upon civilians was still treated as an outrage.<sup>40</sup>

In this context then, the *History*'s account suggests that in city after city around the empire assemblies similar to that of the pro-Botaneiates Constantinopolitans came together to make decisions regarding their role in the empire's political game. In the case of Nikephoros Bryennios' rebellion Attaleiates notes that

when Bryennios was about to enter Adrianople, almost the entirety of the city came out and occupied the areas flanking the approach. The crowd standing around in the field resembled a large herd as it awaited his arrival. When his pennons came into view and his regiments advanced announcing his imposing arrival, and when the horns blared from all sides presaging something awesome and wondrous, at that point he appeared in full regalia, surrounded by a large escort. When the townspeople who had come out to witness the event arranged themselves in ordered lines, the soldiers extended their shields and lifted the points of their weapons into the air in unison, the horns and trumpets blared, and acclamations were loudly chanted by everyone.<sup>41</sup>

Bryennios' grand ceremonial entry to Adrianople was more than an opportunity for the display of Byzantine statecraft in a provincial setting. It

was the culmination of internal deliberations and actual negotiations between local elites, rebels, the government and the population of the urban centres in question.<sup>42</sup> A case in point is in fact Rhaidestos where the aristocratic Batatzina, wife of Bryennios' ally Batatzes, initiated a deliberative process that led the city to the side of the rebel and away from Michael VII's fold.<sup>43</sup>

As we turn back to Constantinople to follow Botaneiates' rise to the throne in early 1078 we note that the acclamation of the new emperor by the combined assembly of the elite and the remainder of the city's populace confers legitimacy upon the rebellious general and reinforces the sense that popular assent is an essential requirement for the legitimate authority of an emperor.<sup>44</sup> If, however, popular, quasi-democratic acclamation in both provincial and Constantinopolitan settings is a constitutive element of imperial legitimacy, a clean judicial slate is added to Botaneiates' reputation as warrior and model citizen to further enhance his profile as a credible contender for the throne. As noted by the *History*, Botaneiates

had never been accused of anything: despite all his deeds he had never been charged with injustice by anyone. I myself who am writing this am a witness to this, having been a judge for many years and presided in trials over all manners of person, namely soldiers, citizens, and magistrates, both in the Reigning City and in the course of imperial campaigns, and also regarding different types of *facta* and cases. In no court did I find him convicted or accused of either a small or a more serious affair. Forsooth, I speak the truth, God be my witness, and not sycophantic lies.<sup>45</sup>

Here the legitimizing rationale runs a peculiar course. God stands witness in a legal brief according to which the contender for the throne had never been charged with injustice. The empire's body politic and its state instruments as those were embodied in the judges and the courts had nothing on the noble warrior. Attaleiates, here in the role of the body politic's memory, could affirm Botaneiates' eligibility by virtue of his familiarity with the empire's court records. Thus, a system that addresses injustice in formally constituted courts appointed by the emperor and operating under his supervision and God's own sleepless eye,<sup>46</sup> is here turned on its head. A judge who invokes God as he addresses the empire's citizenry on behalf of the contender affirms Botaneiates' right to rule on account of a life lived within the confines of the

law. The top-down reading of the empire's history is therefore turned on its head as the empire's civilians and their civilian institutions become the yardsticks for the assessment of the urbane Botaneiates.

The significance of Attaleiates' reference to the courts is reinforced when we jump back in time to the reign of Leo VI, a Byzantine emperor whose legal work is discussed by Attaleiates in the *History*.<sup>47</sup> Leo introduces a series of his own laws with a peculiar formula. We see in Novel 19 the following fascinating legal rationale:

Within the framework of our care and concern for the just content of the laws, we have noted that in the [Justinianic] Code [2.3.15], a law was included, which, being obviously unreasonable, has not found acceptance in popular consciousness, and as a consequence is neither in effect nor is it actively used. ... Because, then, we realized the nature of this law, and since before our own decision it had been struck down by popular consciousness, we declare it inactive with a decree.<sup>48</sup>

The emperor's understanding of the law, does not, in this case, spring from the Ulpianic and rather autocratic *princeps legibus solutus est*, but rather from a republican conception of the state that placed the members of the Byzantine polity, the much maligned market types, at the centre of the political process. Such tradition and practice, both convincingly outlined by Anthony Kaldellis in *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome*, underpinned Attaleiates' emphasis on popular and institutional checks on the process that led to the rise of a new emperor to the throne. Military valour was an essential component of the rebel's persona, and effectiveness in war was an attribute appreciated by civilian populations of the empire's urban centres, as noted by both Psellos and Attaleiates, who emphasized the popular approbation enjoyed by the martial Romanos IV Diogenes before he rose to the throne.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, military valour was to be placed in the context of civilian values, interpreted through a distinctly urban set of ideals.

In conclusion, while Psellos has for years framed our approach to the relationship between separately conceived civilian and military factions, we may have to think rather of the social, cultural, economic and political realities that engender a need for language that will best describe the relationship between the empire's assertive new urban strata and their

brawny defenders. We know from the laws of the empire, which regulated issues of landownership in the empire's rural communities, that emperors and the people around them conceived of an integral relationship between civilians and the armed defenders of the body politic. In practical terms we see those same civilian populations submitting, after internal deliberation, to one or the other military leader for purposes of self-defence, as seen in the case of Rouselios and the Amaseians.<sup>50</sup>

Scholarship has for years pointed out that the eleventh-century reorganization of the empire's military posture pushed significant forces to the area of the new expanded frontier, where urban centres from Antioch, Melitene, Theodosiopolis and Ani became forward bases for the empire's armies. Might it be that in such thriving towns and cities, as much as in the empire's capital, we see the evolution of the image of the urbane military commander, a fellow much closer to ancient republican models of sociability and political engagement than the caricature of the autonomous and fundamentally antisocial Digenis Akritis.

In his recent book on memories of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge, Ray Van Dam reads the various panels on the Arch of Constantine that represent the entry of that emperor in Rome after the defeat of Maxentius. Van Dam makes a compelling argument for the gradual transformation of the victor from military man to togate *princeps*, in the style of Augustus, the man who had first mandated the use of togas in the *rostra*. Attaleiates' account of Michael and Nikephoros Botaneiates harks back to this tradition.<sup>51</sup> It is for us to ask how much of this is eleventh-century neo-republicanism, and how much simple continuation of an imperfectly charted and surprisingly discursive Byzantine conception of the political.<sup>52</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Attaleiates, *History*, 271. All references to Attaleiates' *History* retain the page numbers from the original Bonn edition that can be found in brackets in existing translations in Modern Greek,

Spanish and English. All translated excerpts from the *History* refer to A. Kaldellis and D. Krallis (tr.), *Michael Attaleiates: History* (Washington, DC, 2012).

- [2](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 26, on the panic in Constantinople during Tornikios' siege of the city; D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh Century Byzantium* (Tempe, AZ, 2012), 134–8 and 186–9, for a discussion of this event.
- [3](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 26; later in the *History* (58–9), Michael V resigns to spare the citizens of the capital the bloodletting that would ensue were he to doggedly defend his place on the throne. This event mirrors the resignation of Michael I in the face of Leo V's rebellion in book 1 of the Continuator of Theophanes in I. Bekker (ed.): *Theophanes continuatus; Ioannes Cameniata; Symeon Magister; Georgius monachus* (= CSHB 45; Bonn, 1838), 17.22–18.8 and I. Thurn (ed.): *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum* (= CFHB 5; Berlin, 1973), 8.53–61, henceforth Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*.
- [4](#) Leo the Deacon, *History* IV.6 in C.B. Hase (ed.), *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historia Scriptoresque Alii Ad Res Byzantinas Pertinentes* (Paris, 1819), 39.6–24, for military displays frightening to civilians, and *History* IV.7, ed. Hase 40.1–8, on the Constantinopolitans' reactions to Nikephoros Phokas' Armenian soldiers.
- [5](#) J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris, 1990); W. Kaegi, ‘The Controversy about the Bureaucratic and Military Factions’, *BF* 19 (1993), 25–33, for a summation of the arguments pertaining to the civilian–military clash; more recently A.P. Kazhdan and S. Ronchey, *L’aristocrazia bizantina: del principio dell’ XI alla fine del XII secolo* (Palermo, 1997), 57, for a return to the status quo ante, specifically addressing Kaegi. For a recent summation of scholarship and presentation of the state of the field, see J. Haldon, ‘Social Élites, Wealth, and Power,’ in J. Haldon (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium* (Chichester, 2009), 170, for the important distinction between a ‘ruling power élite’ and élite in general, 185–6, for short comment on the mid-11th-century clash between the ‘civilian’ faction and the armies of Anatolia.
- [6](#) Psellos, *Chronographia* 7.3–4 in E. Renaud (ed.), *Chronographie ou Histoire d’un siècle de Byzance (976–1077)* (Paris, 1967), vol. 2: 84–6; Ioannis Zonaras, *Epitome Historion* in L. Dindorf (ed.): *Ioannis Zonarae Epitome historiarum* (Leipzig, 1868), 659 rehashing Psellos.
- [7](#) E. de Vries-Van der Velden, ‘Psellos, Romain Diogénès et Manzikert’, *BSI* 58 (1997), 274–310.
- [8](#) For an influential reading of Attaleiates’ pro-military/aristocratic tendencies see A.P. Kazhdan, ‘The Social Views of Michael Attaleiates’, in A.P. Kazhdan, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the*

*Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1984). For a different take on this issue see Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*.

- [9](#) A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015) for a compelling conceptualization of Byzantine politics in republican light.
- [10](#) L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge, 2012), 4 notes that in instances such as the ones discussed here we may be dealing with the ‘ongoing process of creating cultural memory’, through the repeated and adaptive engagement with the existing textual and other ruins of the Byzantine’s Roman past. Republican ideas and memories of the republic, which Neville herself discusses throughout her work, would be just one of many options in the constant re-working of Byzantine subjectivities.
- [11](#) For biographical information on Attaleiates see Kaldellis and Krallis, *The History*, vi–ix; Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 1–35.
- [12](#) I. Pérez Martín, *Miguel Ataliates: Historia* (Madrid, 2002), xxxv–xlvii, for the process of composition.
- [13](#) Attaleiates is interested in the political man, the *pragmatikos aner* of Polybios’ work. A search in TLG furnishes 105 uses of cognates of the word *pragma* in the *History*. The forms *pragmata* or *pragmasi* (in the dative), referring to state affairs, appear 67 times, nearly once every 5 pages.
- [14](#) For an introduction to the *History*, see Kaldellis and Krallis, *The History*, xiv–xvi; Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, xxx–xxxiv; I. Pérez Martín, *Miguel Ataliates: Historia* (Madrid, 2002), for her essential introduction to her edition and translation of the text; for a discussion of the encomium’s place in the history, see C. Amande, ‘L’encomio di Niceforo Botaniate nell’ *Historia* di Attaleiate: Modelli, fonti, suggestioni letterarie’, in M.G. Angeli Bertinelli and L. Piccirilli (eds), *Serta Historica Antiqua II* (Rome, 1989), 265–86 and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 142–57.
- [15](#) Anonymous, ‘*Istoriā Aύτοκρατόρων* in PG 110: 1252; Anonymous, *Σύνοψις Χρονική* in K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη 7* (Venice, 1894): 170–1, for Byzantine critiques of some aspects of Botaneiates’ reign.
- [16](#) D.A. Russel and N.G. Wilson (ed.), *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford, 1981), 80, for genealogy; I. Ševčenko (ed.), *Chronographiae quae Theophanis continuati nomine fertur liber quo vita basillii imperatoris*

*amplectitur* (Berlin, 2011), 10–18, for a Byzantine iteration of the Menandrian ideal in the *Vita Basilii*.

[17](#) U. Criscuolo (ed.), *Theodosii Diaconi De Creta captata* (Leipzig, 1979).

[18](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 231–2

[19](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 232–3

[20](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 233

[21](#) M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1990), 216, 221, on the final stage of a triumph that saw an emperor removing his military gear to don civilian garb. In the capital this change took place in close proximity to the senate building in the forum of Constantine.

[22](#) It is unclear how stories regarding the personal heroism of individual warriors circulated. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 190–5 offers analysis and bibliography about the imperial victory bulletins that kept the population informed of the latest successes at the front.

[23](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 236: Τί δέ; Οὐτως ἔχων εὐκλείας καὶ εὐπραγίας ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ παρὰ πάντων θαυμαζόμενός τε καὶ δοξαζόμενος καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἔργων μεγαλουργήμασι σεμνυνόμενος, μέγα φρονῶν ἦν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ κατορθώμασι καὶ ἀλαζονείᾳ κατεπαιρόμενος τῶν πολλῶν καὶ τοῖς ἀστικοῖς ὡς ἀγοραίοις τισὶ καὶ ἀόπλοις μὴ εὐθύμως καὶ προσηνῶς ὄμιλῶν καὶ συναυλιζόμενος ἀλλ, ὥσπερ τινὲς τῶν κεκρατημένων τῷ πάθει τῆς κενοδοξίας, ἑαυτὸν ὑπεραίρων καὶ τῷ κόμπῳ τερατευόμενος τὸ ἀνόμοιον, οἷα φιλεῖ τοὺς πολλοὺς ποιεῖν τῶν στρατιωτῶν; Οὐμενοῦν.

[24](#) See Psellos, *Chronographia* 7 Romanos IV, 14.1–5 (ed. Renaud, 2: 159), on Romanos' arrogance towards the empress Eudokia; Konstantinos Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike* in O. Lampsidis (ed.), *Constantini Manassis Breviarium Chronicum* (Athens, 1996), 347.6415–18 replicated the Psellian theme of Romanos' hostility towards Eudokia and her children.

[25](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 236–7. The word used here for citizen is *πολίτης*, for urbane conversation *λόγους ἀστείους*.

[26](#) P. Magdalino, ‘Court, Society, and Aristocracy’, in J. Haldon (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium* (Chichester, 2009), 216. Magdalino describes court culture as obsessively hierachal. In our examples we see an aristocrat and future emperor, by rank and social status a member of the courtly scene, breaking barriers of class and office, and cast by Attaleiates as someone who sought and adopted an identity that integrates him in the mass of Constantinopolitans.

- [27](#) D. Krallis, “Democratic” Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates’ “Republicanism” in Context’, *Viator* 40.2 (Fall 2009): 35–7, for Byzantine views of the rowdy city populace and relevant citations.
- [28](#) The distinct nature of urban life is at the centre of Tim Greenwood’s ‘Aristakēs Lastivertc i and Armenian urban consciousness’, Chapter 7 in the present volume, which is focused on the urban experience in eleventh-century Armenia. Lively discussion of politics was certainly not confined to urban settings as seen in Ioannes Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, 493.98–494.17 (ed. Thurn) where we see soldiers from two opposing armies involved in political discourse and disputation before the bloody battle of the field of Ares in the vicinity of Nikaia.
- [29](#) Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, ch. 4, 115–69, on the actions of great men in Attaleiates’ work.
- [30](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 215–16.
- [31](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 238, τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ πλουτοποίαν καὶ τὸ πρᾶον καὶ τὸ ὄμιλητικὸν καὶ ἀστεῖον καὶ εὔχαρι.
- [32](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 238.
- [33](#) A.P. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 1982), 20–35, for a bleak perspective on individual Byzantines’ relations with their peers and polity; specifically 27–8 for friendlessness, 29–30 for weak social ties, and 32 for the significance of family ties.
- [34](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 256.
- [35](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 270.
- [36](#) D. Krallis, “Democratic” Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium’, 35–53, for the popular rebellion of 1042; on legitimate rebellions against emperors see J.-C. Cheynet, ‘Se révolter légitimement contre l’empereur’, in P. Depreux (ed.), *Révolte et statut social de l’Antiquité tardive aux Temps modernes* (2008): 57–73; Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 6.47, ll. 1–3 (ed. Renaud, 1: 140), Konstantinos IX Monomachos did not understand that the *basileia* ‘is a form of service to benefit one’s subjects’; Attaleiates, *History*, 100, for the empress Eudokia breaking her private oath to the emperor for reasons of the state.
- [37](#) Attaleiates, *History*, 15: ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἀνωθεν στρατηγούμενοι – ‘but as though they were led from on high’, is how Attaleiates frames popular action in the 1042 rebellion.

38 Nikephoros Bryennios, *Material for History*, 3.20 in P. Gautier (ed. and trans.): *Nicéphore Bryennios, Histoire* (= *CFHB* 9; Brussels, 1975), 247.16–18 hence-forth Bryennios, *Material for History*. This was picked up by Leonora Neville in her recent *Heroes and Romans*, 167.

39 Bryennios, *Material for History*, 3.20 (ed. Gautier, 247.18–20).

40 Attaleiates, *History*, 313, on Theodosios and Ambrose.

41 Attaleiates, *History*, 247–8.

42 Ioannes Skylitzes, *Historion*, 34.69–76 (Thurn), for negotiations between a rebel and individual towns; Nikephoros Bryennios, *Material for History*, 3.9–10 (ed. Gautier, 227–9) on the citizens of Traianoupolis vacillating between rebellion and loyalism; on negotiations between cities and rulers see A. Laiou, ‘The Emperor’s Word: Chrysobulls, Oaths and Synallagmatic Relations in Byzantium (11th–12th c.)’, *TM* 14 (2002), 347–62.

43 Attaleiates, *History*, 244–5, and Krallis, “Democratic” Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium’, 44–6, on Batatzina.

44 Close companions, soldiers and provincials had in fact acclaimed Botaneiates as emperor well before the populace of Constantinople received him in the capital city. Attaleiates, *History*, 215.

45 Attaleiates, *History*, 255–6.

46 Attaleiates, *History*, 196, on the ‘Sleepless Eye’ and the broader problem of Byzantine injustice.

47 Attaleiates, *History*, 312, on Leon VI.

48 Sp. Troianos, *Oι Νεαρές: Λέοντος του Σοφού* (Athens, 2007), 88–90; Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 9–14 with insights on Leo’s legislation.

49 G.T. Dennis (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Orationes Panegyricae* (Leipzig, 1994), 175–6, oration 18, on Romanos as saviour of the Romans; Attaleiates, *History* 101: καὶ ὡς τὰ πράγματα ἔδειξαν, οὐ πάνυ μάτην ἡλπίκασιν οἱ πολλοί – ‘As events proved, the hopes of the majority of people were not in vain’; Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 94–100, on Psellos and Attaleiates as Romanos IV propagandists.

50 Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* Book 1.2–1.7 in D.R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis (eds), *Annae Comnenae Alexias* (= *CFHB* 40; Berlin and New York, 2001), 14–17; J.-C. Cheynet, ‘L’Asie Mineure d’après la correspondance de Psellos’, *BF* 25 (1999), 233–42, here 238, on Rouselios’ activities in the Armeniakon theme.

51 R. Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (Cambridge, 2011), 133–5.

52 Over the years Paul Magdalino has consistently pointed out the significance of such republican ideas for Byzantine self-definition, most recently in ‘Court, Society, and Aristocracy’, 217–18, 229. There is, finally, perhaps another aspect to Attaleiates’ conceptualization of the urbane warrior. In ‘Thinking with War’, a chapter of his book on *Ancient Warfare* (Oxford, 2004), Harry Sidebottom, analyses the ways in which ethnographical thinking among the Greeks and the Romans defined alien populations on account of their way of fighting. Warfare was seen as such a pervasive aspect of life that culture and the ‘character’ of a polity or nation could be defined by its distinct approaches to fighting. Given the hold that such modes of analysis could gain on people’s imaginations a warrior of the Byzantine armies could construct his own ‘ethnographic’ reading of the medieval Roman polity according to which disciplined soldiers, fighting for the *patria*, are juxtaposed to rowdy, weak, unarmed civilians. By seeking to bridge the divide implicit in such modes of analysis Attaleiates is perhaps attempting to make the Byzantine polity whole once again at a time of civil war and evident imperial decline.

## 11

### Leo of Chalcedon

### Conflicting ecclesiastical models in the Byzantine eleventh century

*Judith Ryder*

This chapter has its origins in research undertaken for the online *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*,<sup>1</sup> for which I was a postdoctoral researcher between 2007 and 2010. Much of my work on the *PBW* involved dealing with ecclesiastical material from the eleventh century. This material, which ranged from the extensive documentation relating to the so-called ‘schism of 1054’<sup>2</sup> to details of the trial of John Italos,<sup>3</sup> the writings of John the Oxite,<sup>4</sup> and, more generally, ecclesiastical developments during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118),<sup>5</sup> convinced me that there is much yet to be investigated regarding the state of the Church in Byzantine and Byzantine-influenced territories in this period. Tantalizing hints emerge as to the development of and conflicts between different elements of the Church in these years, closely connected to the intricacies of the political situation. One of the most interesting discussions of such matters remains the article published by Tiftixoglu in 1969,<sup>6</sup> which offers a very useful model for consideration of the details of the situation. His example, however, could very usefully be followed up more widely. That it has largely not been – although there are some notable exceptions<sup>7</sup> – may be attributable to

something of a reluctance to deal with the historical details concerning ecclesiastical and theological issues relating to Byzantium.

Developments in the Byzantine Church in the second half of the eleventh century are put into sharp focus by the sharp contrast with developments in the west. The eleventh century is generally acknowledged as a crucial period in the development of the western Church, with the Gregorian reform movement and associated major shifts in the functioning of the papacy, methods of theological debate and definition, disciplinary matters such as the institution of compulsory clerical celibacy (1059), and so on. These went hand-in-hand with significant political shifts, such as the papacy's accommodations with the Normans in southern Italy from the 1050s; and the century ended, of course, with the launch of the First Crusade. The ramifications of eleventh-century developments in western Church and society are endless.<sup>8</sup>

But what about developments in the Byzantine Church? Here we touch upon a perennial problem. There is inevitably a lot of discussion of differences between the Byzantine Church and the western Church.<sup>9</sup> For the early to mid-Byzantine periods this often goes along with mutterings about the pentarchy;<sup>10</sup> for the later periods, it goes along more with the theme of the Byzantine commonwealth.<sup>11</sup> There are, however, a great number of other factors to be taken into account, which have different weightings at different times. One is the relationship between church hierarchy and emperor<sup>12</sup> – including the frequent removal of patriarchs for political reasons; another is the role of bishops (particularly given the territorial fluctuations of Byzantium);<sup>13</sup> yet another is the role and authority of spiritual leaders and spiritual movements.<sup>14</sup> There are numerous others. The Byzantine Church is notoriously complex; as, indeed, are its modern descendants.<sup>15</sup>

My work for the *PBW* on eleventh-century ecclesiastical texts has given me close contact with considerable amounts of raw data from different individuals and different circumstances, in which varied attitudes to the nature and organization of the Church emerge. Over time, this material could form a basis for building up an interesting picture of how the

Byzantine Church was evolving in this period. For the purposes of this present chapter, however, I shall focus on one particular set of material, and see how it might fit into the process of building up a bigger picture. This material relates to Leo of Chalcedon, a figure of some notoriety in the latter years of the eleventh century, who appears, briefly, in the vast majority of general secondary accounts of the period. There are aspects of Leo's case, however, which are rarely discussed, both relating to the political situation and, more importantly from the point of view of my overall aims, relating to ecclesiastical developments.

Leo is probably best known from his appearances in the *Alexiad*.<sup>16</sup> In 1081, Alexios I Komnenos, having just seized power, was desperately in need of funds, and took the step of expropriating church property to help plug the gap. In the *Alexiad*, the episode is presented as a response to dire emergency, in which due regard was given to holy canons: earlier canonical precedent allowed sacred objects to be used for the ransom of prisoners of war, which could be regarded as a parallel emergency, given the external threats to the empire. Great emphasis is made that the objects to be expropriated were both few in number and were no longer in use. In Anna's account, Isaac Komnenos, Alexios' brother, persuaded the synod of his case before proceeding to the expropriations. However, opposition arose particularly from Leo of Chalcedon, who spoke out when gold and silver was being removed from the doors of the Chalkoprateia, a church near to St Sophia, in the heart of Constantinople. Leo, in Anna's account, was particularly incensed against Isaac Komnenos. Again according to Anna, when Alexios returned and was collecting funds a second time, Leo attacked the emperor personally. There was then a long discussion about sacred objects and their worship. 'On some points', says Anna, 'his [i.e. Leo's] arguments were reasonable and befitting a bishop, but on others he was unorthodox'. In Anna's account, Leo's position became more and more entrenched and unreasonable, unwilling to listen to reason from members of the synod, as he was incited to continue in his opposition by certain ill-disposed people in influential positions. He ended up being deprived of his bishopric and eventually exiled to Sozopolis, well provided-for in his exile by Alexios.<sup>17</sup>

Leo does, however, appear again in the *Alexiad*. As Dion Smythe points out,<sup>18</sup> there is something apparently incongruous in his second appearance: whereas earlier he was characterized as a troublesome extremist, when he reappears it is in a saintly guise, providing a horse for George Palaiologos to escape on following the battle of Dristra in 1087. Anna refers to her earlier mention of Leo, so it can scarcely be said that she has forgotten what she said before.<sup>19</sup>

The description of Leo in the *Alexiad* has largely influenced how he has been fitted into narrative histories. He is characterized as the champion of the Church against the emperor, a courageous and outspoken critic who suffered for his principles. Michael Angold has described him in his *Political History* as ‘defending the church against the arbitrary power of the emperor’<sup>20</sup> – although I shall have more to say later about Angold’s more developed treatment of Leo in *Church and Society*.<sup>21</sup> The Palgrave volume on *Byzantine History* describes Leo as organizing a ‘vociferous campaign of protest’ against Alexios’ confiscations.<sup>22</sup> Hussey describes Leo in similar terms, with the conclusion that he was a ‘virtuous, courageous, and likeable person with a certain dry sense of humour and friends did not desert him’.<sup>23</sup> Dion Smythe largely repeats what is in the *Alexiad*.<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Morris quotes particularly from Leo’s letter to Alexios in which he emphasizes above all the desecration of religious houses.<sup>25</sup> The most developed treatment of Leo of Chalcedon along these lines, however, is that of John Thomas, who draws Leo into the role of a leader of a wider anti-charistike movement, against the private ownership and expropriation of ecclesiastical properties.<sup>26</sup> Leo’s case is, however, far from simple, and brings in a number of different strands running through the Alexian period. The texts that exist concerning Leo other than the *Alexiad* automatically call for considerable reassessment of Anna’s account, partly on factual grounds but also in terms of the different perspective they can give on the issues at stake.

The texts relating directly to Leo’s case include the following: a letter from 1082, from Leo himself, to Alexios, bringing accusations against the patriarch Eustratios Garidas and calling for the restitution of the former

patriarch Kosmas;<sup>27</sup> an imperial *semeioma* of 1082 in which Alexios committed himself and his successors to never again expropriating church property;<sup>28</sup> another imperial *semeioma*, of 1086, detailing the development of Leo's case and the reasons for his deposition;<sup>29</sup> a letter from Basil of Euchaita to Isaac Komnenos, declaring that he has come to believe that canons forbidding the destruction of Holy Scripture apply equally to icons;<sup>30</sup> an exchange of letters between Leo and Nicholas of Adrianople discussing Basil of Euchaita's letter;<sup>31</sup> a collection of patristic and canonical excerpts compiled by Isaac Komnenos as part of the theological debate surrounding Leo's case;<sup>32</sup> a letter from Leo to the *protovestiarissa*, mother-in-law of the empress, rejecting a proposal from Alexios that Leo should return to Constantinople and live as a monk;<sup>33</sup> and another letter of Leo, probably to Nicholas of Adrianople, along similar lines to that written to the *protovestiarissa*.<sup>34</sup> Also of relevance is the material for the synod of Blachernae in 1094.<sup>35</sup> There are also further events and texts which have bearing on the case, but inevitably not all possible ramifications can be considered in the scope of this chapter.

As Grumel pointed out many years ago,<sup>36</sup> the first difference between these texts and Anna's account in the *Alexiad* is the named target of Leo's criticism. Anna, as has been seen, presents Leo as attacking Alexios and Isaac Komnenos. Leo certainly does speak very negatively of Isaac, and delivers very strongly worded warnings to Alexios, but in his public accusations his target was the patriarch Eustratios Garidas. In his letter to Alexios of 1082, Leo accuses Garidas of being responsible for the despoliation of the Church and of misuse of the funds thereby acquired, and demands his removal and the restoration of the former patriarch, Kosmas.<sup>37</sup> Leo claims to be speaking on behalf of the entire Church, and of the deposed patriarch. And as events developed, Leo's opposition until his deposition and exile continued to be based on his accusations against Garidas. An early hearing cleared Garidas of the charges, but he nevertheless resigned. After Garidas' resignation, in 1084, Leo refused to concelebrate with his successor, Nicholas Grammatikos – on the grounds that Garidas' name had not been

removed from commemoration. Leo did not accept the findings of the investigation that had cleared Garidas.<sup>38</sup>

In some respects, the identification of Garidas as Leo's principal target need not make much difference to how Leo's role is read. There is no doubt that attacking Garidas for his role in the expropriations was also to attack Alexios' general policy in this regard. However, the political implications go further. It is well known that Kosmas was a thorn in the flesh of Alexios and his supporters: Kosmas had been forced from office, but refused to go until Alexios upheld his marriage to Eirene Doukaina, there being concerns that Alexios did not intend to do so.<sup>39</sup> Leo's attack on Garidas and call for Kosmas' return thus has highly political overtones. This ties in with Anna's account, where she describes Leo as being incited by leading members of the political elite,<sup>40</sup> as well as with Leo's letter to the *protovestiarissa*.<sup>41</sup> It would also explain neatly Leo's second appearance in the *Alexiad*, closely connected with George Palaiologos – George had also very publicly supported Eirene, insisting on having her acclaimed together with Alexios when there was an attempt to quash such an acclamation.<sup>42</sup> Another interesting observation is that it seems that Leo, having repeatedly been brought into line when confronted over his accusations, then repeatedly renewed his opposition when leading figures, particularly Alexios and Isaac, were absent from the capital;<sup>43</sup> this suggests a certain degree of opportunistic political agitation. That there were political aspects to Leo's involvement is thus quite clear, although it would obviously be difficult to say whether he was more interested in being part of a specific political grouping (Anna speaks of a 'Chalcedonian Faction'<sup>44</sup>) or whether he reflected their interests because of concerns about political interference in the removal of Kosmas. The latter possibility would take us back to the traditional image of him as championing the Church against the emperor, but with a slightly different slant to it.

A second point in which the other texts present a rather different picture from the *Alexiad*, and which has connections with the first point, is that Leo was not, in 1086, condemned on theological grounds. The two charges upheld against him were: that he had approached the emperor directly with

his accusations (i.e. against Garidas), rather than going through the correct ecclesiastical channels;<sup>45</sup> and that he had refused to accept an earlier imperial decree declaring Garidas innocent of Leo's charges.<sup>46</sup> A third charge, that of sycophancy or false accusation, was not officially upheld, on a technicality;<sup>47</sup> although one of the main thrusts of the *semeioma* is that Garidas had been cleared of accusations against him very early on and that Leo had continued his accusations without being willing to bring actual evidence.<sup>48</sup> The theological discussion proper, on the question of icons, largely seems to have developed later, and can be found in the various letters, the florilegium compiled by Isaac Komnenos, and in the discussions surrounding the synod of Blachernae, at which Leo acknowledged his error on certain points and was reconciled and rehabilitated.

A third point is that there is a lack of clarity about the exact nature of Alexios' expropriations. Evidence is sparse. The only two specific cases mentioned in the opposition sources, as far as I am aware, are the stripping of gold and silver from the doors of the Chalkoprateia,<sup>49</sup> and the removal of consecrated objects from the church of St Abercius, mentioned in the *semeioma* of 1086 as part of Leo's accusations against Garidas.<sup>50</sup> Other than that, we have wide-ranging but unspecific accusations of despoliation; and when these are quoted, they are mostly quoted from Leo's own writings, although with the notable exception that Alexios himself is fairly self-accusatory (albeit in general terms) on the issue in his *semeioma* of 1082.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, if Alexios was in dire straits and needed substantial funds, the expropriations must have been considerable, and where we have allusions to them in less partisan terms (or, at least, less negatively partisan terms) there seems to be an emphasis on sacred vessels – on portable and valuable items, suited to reuse for immediate financing of military activities.<sup>52</sup> But the heated debate then becomes about icons, and goes along with accusations of heresy.<sup>53</sup>

There is a disjunction here, since although clearly removal of any church property – indeed, of any property – is ideologically charged, making it into a fundamental debate on iconoclasm is a rather different matter. One might

suspect the opposition of playing things up for propaganda purposes: taking a general point upon which most parties could agree (the general undesirability of the expropriations) and setting themselves up as the champions of that cause: not unlike a modern political party or union setting themselves up as ‘the only ones who care about the working classes’, or ‘the only ones who deal responsibly with taxpayers’ money’. If that indeed is what Leo and his supporters were doing, however, they were playing the wrong games with the wrong people. Alexios’ supporters could manipulate theological debate; indeed, something that emerges from various of the writings of the period, including the *Alexiad*, is that the Komnenoi were very well aware of the value of theological propaganda, and sought to exploit it.<sup>54</sup> This seems to be what was going on with Basil of Euchaita’s letter to Isaac Komnenos, in which Basil draws a direct comparison between destruction of icons and destruction of scripture, and accepts that both are canonically forbidden.<sup>55</sup> Nicholas of Adrianople welcomed this development in his letter reporting it to Leo.<sup>56</sup> Leo did not, and launched into the tirade which then got him into deep theological waters, and seems to have been what prompted Isaac Komnenos’ florilegium. Grumel is somewhat perplexed as to why Leo should have taken so much umbrage at Basil’s letter, the contents of which he (Leo) misrepresents.<sup>57</sup> An explanation for this might well be that Leo’s concerns were not, in fact, so much with the theological debate *per se* as with the necessity of maintaining a theological attack as part of his political manoeuvring, thereby keeping the moral high ground. In the event, it was Leo who was out-manoeuvred and had to retract.<sup>58</sup>

There are, however, more strands than this to Leo’s case. The title of this chapter has to do with conflicting ecclesiastical models, as did my opening preamble, but where does this specifically come into Leo’s case? So far, the issues touched upon have been much more political, and although Leo’s attack was on Garidas, this has been connected with Garidas’ relationship with Alexios’ new regime. This kind of political interpretation has already been very neatly dealt with by Michael Angold in *Church and Society*.<sup>59</sup> However, what is often missed – although admittedly, again, not by

Angold,<sup>60</sup> although not drawn out extensively – is that this also has implications in terms of internal ecclesiastical debate.

In the *semeioma* of 1086, when repeatedly pushed to end his schism with the new patriarch, Nicholas Grammatikos, Leo makes a highly interesting statement. He says, first, that he had no need to concelebrate with the patriarch and synod, since he could celebrate in his own church of St Euphemia with his own clergy, as if he were within his own borders – that is, within his own diocese. He also says that charges brought against him for staying apart should also be brought against other ‘archpriests’, who did the same.<sup>61</sup> Leo’s claims were dismissed at the time on the grounds that this was introducing a new argument: he had already made clear that he refused to concelebrate because of the continued mention of Garidas in the liturgy. But this is highly interesting for its assertion of the rights of the higher clergy in their own jurisdictions *against* the powers of the patriarchate, and the implication – assertion, even – that clerics other than Leo were also in opposition. Leo is, moreover, as is quite clear from what has been presented earlier in this paper, not simply asserting independence, but asserting independence in conjunction with a sustained attack on the Orthodoxy of occupants of the patriarchal see. He is effectively setting himself up as the arbiter of Orthodoxy – as is demonstrated by the letter of 1082, where he claims, several times over, to represent the entire Church.<sup>62</sup> What is, of course, unclear, is whether Leo is doing this purely as metropolitan of Chalcedon, asserting his rights and authority within that sphere, and seeking to undermine the role of Constantinople; or whether he is agitating for a change in regime, either on his own behalf or that of another candidate for the see. In any case, his claims and activities constituted a significant attack on Constantinople.

There is also an interesting little anecdote, to which Grumel refers, which describes a certain priest of the Great Church having a series of dreams about Leo which reflect precisely the situation to which the *semeioma* of 1086 refers. In the dreams, Leo was celebrating the liturgy in the church of St Euphemia, dressed in royal robes and with a golden band round his head; when the priest, in astonishment, asked what would happen if the emperor

heard of this, Leo replied to the effect that, just as the strongest in battle were rewarded, so too were those strong in God's cause suitably honoured. To which the priest, in the dreams, replied, 'O royal priest'.<sup>63</sup> Whether there are parallels between this and some elements connected with Michael Kerouarios, who reputedly donned imperial-style clothing in an apparent emulation of ideas coming from the west about the role of the Church,<sup>64</sup> is an interesting question; but if there are, it would be difficult, again, to be certain quite what their significance is. Would they indicate that Leo was manipulating the imagery to assert the role of regional bishops, or would they indicate that Leo had designs on something more himself?

It is well known that, in contrast to the increasing centralization of the western Church, the Orthodox Churches continued to maintain a different balance between major sees and the rights of bishops within their own jurisdictions. This did, however, fluctuate greatly in practice, as well as often in theory. As was highlighted by Tiftixoglu in his article on groupings within the Constantinopolitan clergy, after 1071 practical conditions led to various new developments and rebalancing between different groups. The reign of Alexios then brought a wide range of new legislation on church matters. From about 1084, for example, there was a spate of legislation, much of which aimed at tightening up patriarchal control over the assets of the patriarchate, ensuring control over monasteries and so on. An interesting question here is how much that would have affected the possessions of other sees and other individuals. In his book on *Private Religious Foundations*, John Thomas says that Alexios (through Isaac) limited his expropriations to 'institutions to which the patriarchate had undisputed title'<sup>65</sup> but it is not clear to me what he bases this upon, especially since the question of undisputed title was apparently far from clear in many cases, judging from the legislation of the period. I find it more likely that the circumstances of the expropriations would have lent themselves to potential abuses, and that this, coupled with a drive towards tightening-up of ecclesiastical ownership and procedure in favour of the patriarchate, would have been perceived as a dangerous threat by other groups within the Church. The question has to be

asked who felt particularly threatened by this – whose status and property were threatened.

I remember being advised years ago that, in ecclesiastical disputes, the greater the emphasis on abstruse theological argument, the more one should ask where the money is. Leo of Chalcedon and his supporters made Alexios' expropriations into a high-blown debate on iconoclasm – and lost. How much of what they did might have been spurred on by their own concerns about threats to both their own status and their own property (property pertaining to them as occupants of particular sees, that is), caused by a tightening-up of procedures? *And* even simply by the fact that the patriarchate, by making itself more organized and functional, would automatically be strengthening a centralizing ecclesiastical structure as against a more regionally based one, regardless of the theoretical underpinnings of the situation?

To conclude, it seems to me that Leo of Chalcedon was far from being simply the morally upright defender of the Church against the emperor that he is often portrayed as. No doubt he was indeed genuinely appalled by Alexios' expropriations of church property, but the reasons why he would have been appalled are tied up with both the politics of the time and conflicting ideas about ecclesiastical structures and ecclesiastical rights. The debate was not really about expropriations of church property, except to the extent that expropriations of church property implied a great deal about the structure of authority within the Church; moreover, the expropriations seem to have been largely a useful propaganda tool, helpful in terms of both secular and religious opposition. The difficulties caused by Leo's opposition do also seem to have been genuinely significant. Anna indicates this when she speaks of the existence of a 'Chalcedonian' party, as mentioned above. The indications are that we are dealing with a substantial schism in the Byzantine Church, with political connections and far-reaching implications. The fact that, in order to make public Leo's recantation and reconciliation, a massive gathering was called together at the synod of Blachernae in 1094, also testifies to this.<sup>66</sup> It would be worth taking this question further, and considering how this synod, and Leo's case more generally, fit in with

Alexios' wider policies in the 1090s, as his internal position became more secure and the crusades loomed.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See [www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk).

<sup>2</sup> This part of my work has recently led to the publication of an article, 'Changing Perspectives on 1054', *BMGS* 35 (2011), 20–37. On the schism more generally, see esp. A. Bayer, *Spaltung der Christenheit: Das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054* (2nd edn, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> On John Italos, see L. Clucas, *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Century* (Munich, 1981).

<sup>4</sup> Which has also led to an article, forthcoming: J.R. Ryder, 'John the Oxite and Alexios I Komnenos: Friends or Foes?', in N. Gaul, I. Toth, T. Shawcross (eds), OUP.

<sup>5</sup> On the reign of Alexios, a particularly useful volume is M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds), *Alexios I Komnenos: Papers of the Second Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, 14–16 April 1989. I: Papers* (Belfast, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> V. Tiftixoglu, 'Gruppenbildungen innerhalb der konstantinopolitanischen Klerus während der Komnenenzeit', *BZ* 62 (1969), 25–72.

<sup>7</sup> One might think, for example, of J. Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani im Palästina der Kreuzfahrerzeit: Beiträge und Quellen zur Geschichte des griechischorthodoxen Patriarchats von Jerusalem* (Berlin, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Useful summaries and discussions can be found, for example, in R. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1970) and C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> A central theme, for example, in A. Papadakis (and J. Meyendorff), *The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy* (Yonkers, NY, 1994). A classic on the fundamental differences leading to the schism of 1054 is Y. Congar's *After Nine Hundred Years* (English edn, New York, 1959).

[10](#) The theory that church leadership centred on the five patriarchal sees, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. Of these five, there was general acceptance in the first millennium of some kind of priority of Rome, but interpretation of the grounds for this and its practical application varied. Constantinople's ranking as second was confirmed by the Council of Constantinople of 381, but the impact of this was neither universally accepted nor treated consistently over subsequent centuries. The Islamic expansion of the seventh century, which effectively prevented three of the sees from playing an independent role in the Christian world, inevitably disrupted the idea of pentarchy, which was later manipulated in different ways at different times by the two remaining major sees, Rome and Constantinople, who also increasingly regarded each other's claims as having been forfeited by behaviour.

[11](#) An idea particularly promoted by D. Obolensky in *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971), which emphasizes strongly the cultural and religious links between Byzantium and its Orthodox neighbours. There are, however, difficulties with this pan-Byzantine world view, not least because, although clearly culturally influenced by Byzantium, another clear characteristic of Byzantium's neighbours was a centrifugal rather than centralizing force: Byzantium's Orthodox 'children' often strove for independence of and even domination over Byzantium.

[12](#) An important recent study on this being G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (English edn, Cambridge, 2003).

[13](#) As Byzantium lost territory, bishops fled to the capital, where they continued to hold the title to their sees, although unable to reside in them or carry out their duties there. This happened on repeated occasions. This is particularly relevant for the period under discussion, since after the battle of Manzikert of 1071, in which the Byzantines were defeated and which led to the loss of considerable territories in Asia Minor to the Turks, a large number of bishops were present in Constantinople. This Tiftixoglu identifies as having a powerful effect on the balance of ecclesiastical power in the capital.

[14](#) One thinks, for example, of the controversial elements of the life and writings of Symeon the New Theologian, whose emphasis on spiritual fatherhood and spiritual experience as the repository of authority explicitly undermined the official Church. This comes across particularly in his letters, recently edited and translated by H.J.M. Turner, *The Epistles of St Symeon the New Theologian* (Oxford, 2009).

[15](#) As a reading of T. Ware (Kallistos, Bishop of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, 1963) makes clear.

[16](#) English translation, E.R.A. Sewter, published as *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* (Harmondsworth, 1969). Greek edn: A. Kambylis and D. Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* (Berlin, 2001).

[17](#) For the full episode, see Sewter, *Alexiad*, 157–60; Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, I, 144.16–146.58.

[18](#) D. Smythe, ‘Alexios I and the Heretics: The Account of Anna Komnene’s *Alexiad*’, in Mullett and Smythe, *Alexios I Komnenos*, 232–59, at 256–8.

[19](#) For the episode, see Sewter, *Alexiad*, 227; Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, I, 215.56–70.

[20](#) M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A Political History* (2nd edn, London and New York, 1997), 137.

[21](#) M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995).

[22](#) J. Harris (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Byzantine History* (Basingstoke, 2005), 110.

[23](#) J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986; paperback edn, 1990), 148–9.

[24](#) Smythe, ‘Alexios I and the Heretics’, 254–8.

[25](#) R. Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* (Cambridge, 1995), 270–1.

[26](#) See J.P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, DC, 1987), 192–9.

[27](#) Ed. A.E. Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα ἐκκλησιαστικὸν ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀλεξίου Κομνηνοῦ”, *Ekklesiastike Aletheia* 20 (1900), 403–7, 411–6, 445–7, 455–6.

[28](#) See V. Grumel, ‘L’affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine: Le chrysobulle d’Alexis Ier sur les objets sacrés’, *REB* 2 (1944), 126–33.

[29](#) I. Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène portant déposition de Léon, Métropolitain de Chalcédoine’, *BCH* 2 (1878), 102–28, text at 113–28. On this, see also V. Grumel, ‘L’affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine. Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’, *EO* 39 (1940), 333–41.

[30](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 411–13.

[31](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 413–15, 445–7, 455–6.

[32](#) These are referred to in V. Grumel, ‘Les documents Athonites concernant l’affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine’, *Studi e Testi* 123 (1946), 116–35, 123–4.

[33](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 404–5.

[34](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 405–7.

[35](#) See esp. P. Gautier, ‘Le synode des Blachernes (fin 1094): Etude prosopographique’, *REB*, 29 (1971), 213–84; although it is important to note that this does not include the main text of the document. As a prosopographical study, it is concerned only with the end matter containing the signatures.

[36](#) Grumel, ‘Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’, 334.

[37](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 403a–404a. The references to both Eustratios Garidas and Kosmas are anonymous and allusive, but it is clear that Leo is calling for the restoration of the former patriarch, undoubtedly Kosmas, and bringing vociferous accusations against another figure. That this figure is Eustratios is confirmed by the account in the *semeioma* of 1086, where it is explicit that Leo brought repeated accusations against Eustratios.

[38](#) See Grumel, ‘Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’; also, for the text, Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’.

[39](#) This episode is related in the *Alexiad*: Sewter, *Alexiad*, 108–9; Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 92.65–93, 92.84.

[40](#) Sewter, *Alexiad*, 159 (‘he listened to the prompting of evil-minded men (many of whom at that time held places in the administration’); Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 145.42–3.

[41](#) Lauriates, “Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα”, 405–7.

[42](#) Sewter, *Alexiad*, 105–6; Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 89.78–84.

[43](#) Again, something that emerges from Anna’s account: Sewter, *Alexiad*, 159; Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 145.25–35.

[44](#) Sewter, *Alexiad*, 159–60; Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 146.49.

[45](#) See Grumel, ‘Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’, 338, point 1; Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 124.16–126.22.

[46](#) Grumel, ‘Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’, 338, point 2; Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 126.23–9.

[47](#) Grumel, ‘Le décret ou “semeioma” d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1086)’, 338, point 3; Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 126.29–127.3.

[48](#) Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 116–120.

[49](#) Mentioned in Leo’s letter to Alexios of 1082 (see Lauriates, ‘Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα’, 403b), and repeated in the *semeioma* of 1086 (Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 118.11–14). Anna, of course, also mentions the episode: Sewter, *Alexiad*, 159; Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 145.22.

[50](#) Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 18.14–16.

[51](#) As pointed out by Grumel: Grumel, ‘Le chrysobulle d’Alexis Ier sur les objets sacrés’, 127.

[52](#) Sewter, *Alexiad*, 158; Kambylis and Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, 144.89–97.

[53](#) The more theological aspects of the affair are explored particularly by P. Ioannou: ‘La doctrine de Léon de Chalcédoine et de ses adversaires sur les images’, *OCP* 12 (1946), 177–99.

[54](#) Good examples of this would be Alexios’ dealings with the Bogomils (see esp. Angold, *Church and Society*, ch. 23, ‘The Bogomils’) and his commissioning of the *Dogmatike Panoplia* of Euthymios Zigabenos (see again Angold, where he discusses the text primarily in relation to the Bogomils).

[55](#) Lauriates, ‘Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα’, 411B–413A.

[56](#) Lauriates, ‘Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα’, 413.

[57](#) Grumel, ‘Les documents Athonites’, 22–3.

[58](#) At the council of Blachernae in 1094: see Angold, *Church and Society*, 48; also Gautier, ‘Le synode des Blachernes’.

[59](#) Although the references to Leo in *Church and Society* are understandably brief, they nevertheless are more rounded and touch on more objective points than many interpretations of Leo, which tend to take his rhetoric at face value. *Church and Society*, 47–8, are particularly useful for their direct approach to the political situation and the realities of questions such as schism and the rights and resources of ecclesiastical sees.

[60](#) Angold again points out (*Church and Society*, 57) that Leo’s ability to maintain independence can be connected to his ability to draw on the resources held by his see in the capital.

[61](#) Sakkélion, ‘Décret d’Alexis Comnène’, 122.14–123, 122.5.

[62](#) E.g. Lauriates, ‘Ιστορικὸν ζήτημα’, 403A.21; 403A.37–9; 403B.10–14; 404.2.

[63](#) Grumel, ‘Les documents Athonites’, 127.

[64](#) See Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 237–40.

[65](#) Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 194.

[66](#) Angold, *Church and Society*, 48, emphasizes the scale of this gathering.

12

## Re-Interpreting the Role of the Family in Comnenian Byzantium

### Where blood is not thicker than water

*Peter Frankopan*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the seizure of power by Alexios I Komnenos in 1081 marked a turning point in the social and administrative history of the Byzantine empire. As is well known, the new emperor set about a major reconfiguration of the apparatus of government almost immediately after taking the throne. He restructured the imperial system of honours and rewards, creating what Paul Magdalino has called a ‘princely nobility’ in the process.<sup>1</sup> Power was concentrated in the hands of his family with the most important positions in the empire reserved for his relatives.<sup>2</sup>

Alexios’ focus on his intimates resulted in a major redistribution of wealth – at least among the elite in Byzantium. As one twelfth-century commentator put it, the imperial family and those closest to the emperor were given public money by the wagon-load, with the result that they were able to establish retinues that were previously only appropriate for the sovereign himself. Even the physical spaces occupied by this new elite sharply differed from previous generations of aristocrats. Members of Alexios’ inner circle were able to acquire houses the size of cities, similar in their luxurious appointment to palaces.<sup>3</sup> This seems to be supported by

grants of estates and lands to those close to the emperor, with the grant of the revenues of the peninsula of Kassandra to Adrian Komnenos in 1084 a much-cited example of the new way that largesse was distributed under a new regime that did things in a very different way from the past.

In addition to the promotion of the Komnenoi and their supporters came the concerted lowering of the status of all the families of the empire who did not belong to the favoured elite. Alexios' own entry to Constantinople during his successful coup served as a neat metaphor of what was to come: senators were pulled off their horses and stripped naked, ridiculed by those who would form the backbone of the incoming regime: the new brutally replaced the old.<sup>4</sup> Revolution in Byzantium, as in Russia, France and China, was marked from the outset by violence.

The twin assumptions that Alexios' power was based firmly on his family and that the Byzantine aristocracy were brutally cast aside as a result are long-standing and deeply entrenched in assessments of this emperor's reign.<sup>5</sup> Alexios was able to dominate Byzantium because he was able to rely on a small group of individuals to whom he was related by blood and by marriage. The family was the platform that allowed him to re-vitalize the empire, and was instrumental in enabling him to lead it from a position of catastrophic weakness in 1081 to one of stability as Byzantium emerged blinking, eventually to find its confidence again later in the twelfth century.<sup>6</sup>

The decisive change in the fortunes of the aristocracy, meanwhile, led to substantial social change in the empire, as the great landowning families of Asia Minor were first reduced and then replaced by a new elite, largely based on the western provinces. It was not just those at the apex of the social pyramid who were affected: as Peter Sarris argues in [Chapter 6](#) in the present volume, the Komnenoi oversaw a dismantling of the mode of production, dramatically altering the relationships that the peasantry had to the crown, to landowners and landownership, and to the core structures that had survived intact for several centuries.<sup>7</sup> This essay suggests that these long-held views need some updating.

At first glance, there seems to be little in the sources for Alexios' reign that suggests that there is any reason to try to correct the idea of the

imperial family as anything other than the engine of Comnenian government. Although Anna Komnene and John Zonaras, who provide the two main narrative accounts for the period 1081–1118, offer dramatically different views of Alexios and of his achievements, both seem to be clear about the way the emperor sought to promote his family from the very start of his reign.

Both record the fact that one of Alexios' first acts after taking the throne was to reward those who were close to him. A new title, *sebastokrator*, was created for Isaac Komnenos, who was formally named second in rank to the emperor; another brother, Adrian, was likewise given an exalted title, placing him at the very summit of the new elite, before being named commander of the armies of the western provinces; yet another brother, Nikephoros, was meanwhile placed in charge of the imperial navy, presumably with responsibility to oversee the naval blockade that was an essential step if the Norman assault on Epiros was to be throttled. Then there was Nikephoros Melissenos, married to Eudokia Komnene, who was raised to the rank of *kaisar* and allocated the tax revenues of the city of Thessaloniki. Another brother-in-law, Michael Taronites, was first given one high title and then another, before finally being raised to the rank of *kaisar* as Melissenos had been.<sup>8</sup>

The impression of Alexios establishing a vice-like grip over the machinery of the state and focusing control in the hands of a few trusted family members is only added to by the fact that command of the town of Dyrrachion, which was already under attack at the time of Alexios' accession, was entrusted to yet another brother-in-law, George Palaiologos, after serious doubts were raised about the loyalty of its incumbent.<sup>9</sup> The fact that Anna Komnene and John Zonaras report how the new emperor placed the reins of power in the hands of his mother when he marched to Epirus in 1081 to deal with Robert Guiscard, seems to provide further confirmation that Alexios' accession saw a dramatic re-organization at the top of imperial society, with the new emperor's family emerging as the heart of a new regime that oversaw the rapid overhaul of its branches, if not of its roots, during its very first days in power.<sup>10</sup>

Members of the imperial family also appear regularly in the course of the *Alexiad*, which drips with prosopographical detail about the Komnenoi and their extended kinship group. For example, Isaac Komnenos plays an important supporting role during the trial of Basil the Bogomil, placed by Anna at the very end of the text; John Doukas, another brother-in-law, features prominently in the account of the recovery of western Asia Minor and the defeat of the Turk, Çaka, as well as in operations against the Serbs. George Palaiologos, married to the sister of the empress Irene, also appears several times in the course of the text, reporting on deteriorating conditions in Dyrrachion during the Norman attack of 1081, escaping from the Pechenegs following a disastrous expedition to the Danube in the mid-1080s and coming to blows with Tancred after the fall of Nicaea in 1097.<sup>11</sup>

Then there are the multiple set pieces that take place in the *Alexiad* where the emperor consults with those to whom he is related by blood and marriage (ἐξ αἵματος καὶ ἀγχιστείας). These typically take place in a military setting, with Alexios asking his closest intimates about the course of action he ought to take before engaging in battle. The effect is to show the Byzantine ruler reaching conclusions alongside his relatives, and to present this bloc as being the rock on which Alexios based his empire.<sup>12</sup>

Although Zonaras and Anna Komnene reach radically different conclusions about the way Alexios' achievements should be judged, with the former providing a scathing summary, claiming that the sovereign was not an emperor 'in the strict sense of the word', both appear to agree about the basic premise that the family was of central importance to the emperor and his regime.<sup>13</sup> This appearance is misleading, however, for this is not what either author is actually saying.

In fact, the image of the family plays very different roles for Zonaras and for Anna Komnene. Although for many modern scholars, Zonaras' history serves as the corrective to the *Alexiad* – a critical voice to a biased eulogy – the question of how we should read these two texts alongside each other is complex.<sup>14</sup> The *Epitome* is not simply a route into Anna's account; indeed, the coverage of the reign of Alexios I represents a very small portion of what is a broad and wide-ranging history of the world since the Creation.

Zonaras' aims and objectives, as well as the identification of his audience, need a more detailed investigation than they usually receive. But one thing is clear: his account needs to be read separately from the *Alexiad*, rather than as a corollary to it. There are dangers that looking at them side by side can reinforce received conclusions, rather than challenge them.

Both authors have vested – if very different – interests in presenting Alexios as being surrounded by his supporters. For Zonaras, stressing the emperor's reliance on his own interest group and his lavish rewarding of those close to him is central to a presentation of the Komnenoi as venal, self-serving and obsessed with accumulating wealth and status. Given his own career as a major beneficiary of imperial largesse and repeated promotion, it is significant that the author reveals at the start of his account that he was writing from a monastery to which he had been exiled after being removed from his position as the highest-ranking judge in Byzantium under the emperor Manuel I Komnenos.<sup>15</sup> Taken alone, in other words, Zonaras' harsh appraisal of Alexios and the regime he oversaw would in the first instance be interpreted not as a valuable counterbalance to the *Alexiad*, but as a bad case of sour grapes, a twelfth-century 'Secret History', where home truths and exaggeration jostle uncomfortably side by side as the author settles a succession of scores. Zonaras had been frozen out, discarded after a career that saw him rise to the top of the judiciary; evidently his view of Comnenian society needs to be understood in this context.

While Zonaras' account uses the family as a negative, it would be tempting to say that Anna Komnene uses it as a positive. But this too is not the case. Much depends on not only where the author of the *Alexiad* got her information but also how she used it. It is significant, for example, that Anna appears to have access to accounts centred on campaign notes, military records, letters, family histories of the Doukas and the Palaiologos families, and other secular aristocratic literature, some of which survives, but some does not.<sup>16</sup> In this respect, therefore, the case could be made that the shape and focus on specific individuals in the text are dictated by the material at her disposal; and as a result, the focus on the emperor, his siblings and in-laws is an indicator of information that Anna was able to

gather easily – rather than the framework of a specific portrayal of Alexios' method of governance.

However, as Catherine Holmes has argued with regards to the *Synopsis* of John Skylitzes, there are more nuanced ways to understand the *dramatis personae* that appear in narrative accounts of this period, not least the fact that characters and family members from earlier periods are drawn out for a contemporary audience.<sup>17</sup> This too impacts how we should read the *Alexiad* (and the *Epitome* for that matter). While some aspects of the resonance of Anna's history for mid-12th-century Constantinople have been explored – for example in Paul Magdalino's article on the pen of the aunt – there are further ways in which to explore the prosopography of this text which explains the author's focus or, conversely, her silence.<sup>18</sup>

A good example of how selective both Anna Komnene and John Zonaras are when it comes to handling their material comes from considering the most important appointments that Alexios made at the start of his reign. For in fact, after the new Emperor seized the throne in 1081, the most sensitive and significant positions were not given to members of the imperial family. Nor were they given to men to whom Alexios was related by blood or by marriage.

As Anna Komnene tells us (in highly evocative language), Byzantium was in dire straits when her father took power. With an economy in free-fall the treasury was so empty that there was no point locking the doors; the empire was under such pressure from all sides, from the Turks, Pechenegs and the Normans, that Alexios did not know which way to turn first.<sup>19</sup> In these circumstances, there were a series of appointments to make, all of heightened importance. These included the position of eparch of Constantinople and the *logothetes* of the drome. Neither were allocated to dependable relatives. Nor were the two most sensitive positions of all: command of the military in the west and in the eastern provinces.

According to Zonaras, the new emperor appointed his brother Adrian *domestikos* of the west in 1081.<sup>20</sup> This is not true, since we learn from the *Alexiad* that Adrian only held this position from 1087.<sup>21</sup> In fact, it was Gregory Pakourianos who was named commander of the armies of the west

after Alexios' usurpation, in accordance with an agreement that had been made before the Komnenoi coup.<sup>22</sup> This is intentionally overlooked by Zonaras, because the author's aim is to establish and underline the grip that Alexios and his immediate family established over the empire from the very outset.

Anna Komnene's intentions are also revealed by her commentary here. While she does note the appointment of Pakourianos, she avoids mention of who was named commander of the armies in Asia Minor. However, as we can establish from lead seals dating to the early 1080s, it was Philaretos Brachamios who held this command position under Alexios. Anna does not mention the fact that her father relied heavily on Philaretos, nor that he repeatedly promoted him in the first years of his reign, as Cheynet's sigillographic sequencing has made clear.<sup>23</sup> When she does mention Philaretos, she does so only to state that he enjoyed the patronage of Nikephoros III Botaneiates – presumably in order to lay blame on Alexios' predecessor, rather than Alexios himself, for the disastrous unfolding of Byzantium's position in the east in the mid-1080s. This included Philaretos' defection to the Turks, the loss of the city of Antioch and the collapse of Asia Minor in the chaos that followed.<sup>24</sup>

What is important here is not so much that Anna Komnene is silent about her father's reliance on a man who effectively compromised the entire eastern frontier, but rather that it was non-family members who were appointed to the most sensitive command posts in the empire at a time of extensive outside pressure in 1081. Such is the temptation to see the Komnenoi dominating the state, imposing new ideas, new ways of doing things and new personnel that it is easy to overlook the facts. For in fact, Alexios did not turn to his family or to new blood – rather the opposite: it was to Byzantium's past, and not its future, that the new emperor looked. The two men named to lead the military were very much faces from the old establishment – Pakourianos and Brachamios were men who had made names for themselves in the 1070s, in the decade before the Komnenoi coup.<sup>25</sup> These were no young bucks, no symbols of a new guard easing their way into power. The idea that the new emperor began his reign by purging

the aristocracy and promoting his own family therefore needs careful qualification.

Indeed, there were other figures too who were closely linked to the immediate past who also found favour after Alexios took the throne. Some were related to him – but then they were also either related to, or were close supporters of, one or more of his predecessors. Thus, while George Palaiologos was indeed a brother-in-law to Alexios Komnenos, he was also married to a cousin of Michael VII Doukas, and what is more, a member of a family that had given consistent backing to Nikephoros III and remained loyal to him, even as the Komnenoi and their supporters were rampaging through Constantinople in 1081.<sup>26</sup>

In cases such as these, it was inevitable that loyalties were split. And nowhere can they have been more complicated and tense than among the leading members of the Doukas family – traditionally seen as Alexios' staunchest allies at the time of his accession. While Alexios' marriage to Irene Doukaina had been critical in his selection ahead of his brother Isaac as the best candidate to spearhead the attempt on the throne, it was by no means clear that the Doukai had given up hope of regaining the position that had been lost by Michael VII in 1078: although the deposed emperor had taken holy orders, he was very much alive and well – and could perfectly easily come out of retirement and reclaim power.<sup>27</sup> There were other senior family members too, not least the *kaisar* John Doukas, who may reasonably have had an eye on the throne for themselves.

And in fact, it would seem that the most plausible reason why Alexios crowned Constantine Doukas as his co-emperor was precisely to assuage Doukas ambitions, by marking the young *porphyrogenetos* as the heir apparent to the throne. That Constantine was then engaged to Anna Komnene not long after the birth of the emperor's eldest child likewise was a step designed to maintain the support of one of Byzantium's old families – rather than a sign of the growing ambition of a confident new imperial dynasty.<sup>28</sup>

There were of course many others from the old guard who flourished under the Komnenoi. Constantine Humbertopoulos, who had been

appointed to an important command position by Nikephoros III, was another who switched loyalties to the new regime under the promise of further advancement.<sup>29</sup> Even those who were natural rivals to the emperor were promoted – albeit carefully. Leo and Nikephoros Diogenes, for example, sons of the emperor Romanos IV, evidently enjoyed senior roles in the imperial army, and in the case of the latter, perhaps served a period as governor of Cyprus.<sup>30</sup>

The idea that Alexios was a new sort of emperor, that his regime began with a whole-scale removal of a cadre of officers and officials and their replacement with a new brigade of loyal supporters is one that both Zonaras and Anna Komnene promote – for different reasons. But neither, as it emerges, is reliable on this issue. Nor are they entirely trustworthy about the rewards the emperor gave his supporters, for both twist the story to suit their own needs. In fact, Alexios was weaker and more vulnerable than Zonaras suggests; but the author of the *Alexiad* too had specific motives for singling out key individuals at the start of her father's reign as beneficiaries of Alexios' generosity.

Although Anna Komnene's account of this period is usually interpreted as a key piece of Comnenian propaganda, a more careful reading is needed if we are to understand what a sophisticated and complex text this is. For all the identification of passages in the text where individual siblings, relatives and in-laws of the emperor feature prominently, the most striking thing about Anna's history is actually how little it says about the Komnenoi themselves. A case in point comes from the minimal role played by Alexios' eldest son, the future emperor John II, who barely appears in the course of the text. This is usually explained by modern commentators in terms of Anna's personal enmity towards her brother, caused by the author's attempt to seize the throne after her father's death in 1118.<sup>31</sup> Her animosity was such that on those few occasions where John does appear in the *Alexiad* he is spoken of in terms that are ungenerous: he was an unattractive child, she says; not only that, but just like his son Manuel, he pursued foolish policies in Asia Minor in the decades after Alexios' death.<sup>32</sup>

Whether the rivalry between Anna and John was either as acute or as damaging as modern commentators have long assumed is another matter. For one thing, we are reliant on two colourful sources that are deeply critical about Alexios and about the Komnenoi in general. Few questions have been raised about whether the accounts provided by Zonaras and Choniates of the power struggles in the imperial palace as Alexios lay dying are in any event reliable, or whether these are *topoi* – set pieces designed to show the venality of the ruling dynasty and the emasculation of the imperial family, where real power was supposedly wielded by the empress Eirene and her daughter, rather than by the emperor and his son.<sup>33</sup>

The fact that Choniates states that John and Anna were reconciled after the former took the throne should in any event water down the suggestion that the author of the *Alexiad* deliberately gave her brother a minor role in the text.<sup>34</sup> Rather, the limited visibility that John enjoys should be seen in the wider context of *none* of Alexios' children being prominent in Anna's history. One of the emperor's younger sons, Andronikos, makes a fleeting appearance – just before he is killed in battle at the very end of the text.<sup>35</sup> Two others, Isaac and Manuel, are not even mentioned once. Alexios' daughters, meanwhile, appear only in passing.<sup>36</sup> There is no concerted attempt to represent the imperial family as having consequence, significance or pre-eminence in this period.

And in fact, this observation can be considerably extended, for it is not just the emperor's children who barely feature in the *Alexiad*. The paternal line of the Komnenos family is particularly striking by its absence. Anna conspicuously fails to discuss the ancestry of the imperial family. The author says next to nothing about the background of the Komnenoi, or of the leading roles played by members of the family before 1081. Alexios' father, John Komnenos, is all but ignored, with the author providing no commentary at all about the influence the father had on his son, or on the achievements of her paternal grandfather while he held the position of *domestikos* of the east in the late 1050s. He receives only the briefest of mentions in the text.<sup>37</sup>

Although Anna does include a passage on the Balkan campaign of Isaac I Komnenos (quoted almost *verbatim* from Psellos), she makes no reference to how her great-uncle took the throne.<sup>38</sup> And while it is perhaps understandable that the author does not explain that Isaac lost the throne (or why this had happened), it is nevertheless striking that she does not present Alexios' own seizure of power in terms of the restoration of a former imperial dynasty to the throne. As far as Anna Komnene was concerned, Alexios' family background was irrelevant to his accession as emperor. Nowhere is this more clear than where Anna conspicuously avoids discussing her own family background and that of her father or relating its ancestry and imperial pedigree. Anyone wanting to know about such matters, she states near the start of the text, should consult the history of her husband, Nikephoros Bryennios. In other words, not only did Alexios' family have nothing to do with his accession; they also had nothing to do with his success.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, the conspicuous reticence the *Alexiad* displays about the Komnenoi both before 1081 and after 1118 strikes a chord with what Anna tells us about the family during her father's reign. Here, too, the silence is remarkable. Although the emperor's relatives surface at key moments – being rewarded with titles and honours after his usurpation, for example – there are in fact some very notable absences and omissions about some of those very close to the centre of power in this period. Nikephoros Komnenos, for example, one of Alexios' brothers, appears only once in Anna's account.<sup>40</sup> Even Isaac, whom we learn was named second only to the emperor himself in importance, makes only fleeting appearances in the *Alexiad*: he features briefly presiding over a church council and investigating the heresy of John Italos; he appears defending the behaviour of his son during a crisis point in the early 1090s and again a few years later during the revolt of the Anemas brothers; and he appears in connection with the trial of Bogomil heretics in Constantinople.<sup>41</sup> Otherwise he is absent – a peripheral figure in Alexios' regime.

The same can be said for another brother, Adrian Komnenos, who in spite of holding the position of commander of the armies of the western

provinces, only ever features in passing, name-checked as being on the field of battle in operations against the Pecheneg steppe nomads.<sup>42</sup> The contribution of other characters closely related to the emperor, such as Michael Taronites and Nikephoros Melissenos, likewise has next to no bearing on the central narrative of the *Alexiad*.

This in turn leads to questions about the amorphous group identified by Anna Komnene on several occasions in the text as those to whom her father was related by blood and by marriage (ἐξ αἵματος καὶ ἀγχιστείας). At no point does the author define who is included within this group, nor who was excluded. But the fact that many of Alexios' most trusted lieutenants in his reign – men like Tatikios, Gregory Pakourianos, Manuel Boutoumites or Peter Aliphas – were neither relatives of the emperor nor married to relatives of the emperor, and yet were part of the inner circle that Alexios gathered around him is significant.

Rather, this group is to be understood not in familial or kinship terms but as a reference to heroes of antiquity. Successful leaders, as Anna Komnene knew, had loyal men around them. The *Odyssey*, which Anna makes extensive use of for its imagery of waves crashing against the prow of the ship and its hero struggling to overcome one obstacle after another, provided one obvious model of a leader surrounded by companions, his *hetairoi*, who are a source of advice and strength to Odysseus as he battles his way through an ocean of difficulties.<sup>43</sup> Alexander the Great, another figure whose shadow looms large in the *Alexiad*, likewise had around him a solid group of officers, sharing danger and triumph alike alongside their leader.<sup>44</sup> And of course Jesus Christ, with whom Alexios is implicitly compared by his daughter because of his suffering and the salvation he brought for Byzantium, was surrounded by his disciples – men with whom he literally became united through blood.<sup>45</sup>

In each of these cases, the irony is that while each leader had an important group of followers around him, each was distinctly different from them – and each had a fate that set them apart from their men. And this is very much what the *Alexiad* tells us about the role that the author's father had as emperor. Time and again, Alexios is portrayed being forced to take

the burden of responsibility on his own shoulders; time and again, he is portrayed as the last line of defence against Byzantium's restless neighbours.<sup>46</sup> For Anna Komnene, it was Alexios who should take the credit for rescuing the empire, for saving it from the jaws of disaster. And as the author notes on more than one occasion, such was the emperor's dedication that he paid a heavy price for the weight that he carried: mental and physical exhaustion took their toll on Alexios, who wrestled alone with the problems of his age.<sup>47</sup>

It should be said that the image of Alexios as a loner, rather than as a leader buttressed by a retinue, let alone by his family, is something that finds an echo through almost all the primary material for this period – from speeches to funeral orations, from saints' lives to imperial letters. In the case of the *Alexiad*, there can be no mistaking the emphasis on the achievements of the emperor. The focus on a single individual runs through the heart of Anna's history – to the point that significant events that did not involve Alexios directly are simply omitted from the narrative. The very name of her account could not be more appropriate: the *Alexiad*. This is a work that is interested in the deeds of one man alone.

The author's insistence on the centrality of Alexios naturally creates pressure for the traditional interpretation of the family as the central point of Alexios' Byzantium. Which image is it that we should pick: that of the *Alexiad*, where the family itself is largely excluded from the narrative; or the picture presented by Zonaras that seems not just plausible but highly convincing about the power and omnipresence of the Komnenoi – complete with catchy sound bites about the rapaciousness of those at the very summit of imperial society and the size of their private residences?

The answer lies in finding a way through the two main narrative accounts – and through the other extensive primary material relating to the late eleventh century. As we have already seen, it is questionable whether the long-accepted truism that Alexios introduced major change on his accession stands up to serious scrutiny, given the continuity of personnel, and for that matter of method, with the past. But there is another central plank of traditional attitudes to Alexios' reign that needs to be challenged too.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Alexios' reign is the fact that it falls into two halves of very different character and nature – again, evidenced by the lop-sided shape of the *Alexiad*. The pivotal moment, perhaps not unexpectedly given its significance, was the First Crusade. However, it was not the Crusade that caused major change in Byzantium; rather the Crusade was the direct and dramatic result of this change.

Ironically, it was precisely those closest to Alexios who so nearly proved his downfall in the mid-1090s. Rather than being centred on the support of his family, it was the emperor's relatives that undermined him and lay at the heart of major reform of the empire. Alexios' Byzantium was not built on the family – quite the opposite in fact: it was built on anyone and everyone else.

Alexios' strong tendencies to control every aspect of the state were apparent from the very start of his reign. Not only did he lead almost every military expedition in the 1080s in person, but he invariably insisted that all members of prominent families were brought on campaign with him, no doubt so he could keep a close eye on them. He took direct control of matters in Constantinople itself, presiding over trials of figures like John Italos who was charged with heresy, or of those who stood up to his policies, such as Leo, bishop of Chalcedon. In the first years of his reign, Alexios forced the retirement of not one but two patriarchs. Towards the end of the first decade in power, it was the emperor who was instrumental in effecting a profound rapprochement with the papacy.<sup>48</sup>

The centralization of power certainly came at the expense of those who had enjoyed wealth, status and influence in the provinces. Indeed, such was the crisis of the provincial aristocracy that when pressure rose sharply in Asia Minor at the start of the 1090s, resistance against the emperor quickly gathered pace. Following the failure of Alexios' efforts to restore authority to Nicaea or to western Asia Minor – despite overseeing attempts to do so personally – all eyes turned to the alternatives. Constantine Humbertopoulos, previously a key supporter, was one of those who reached the conclusion that Alexios could not be saved. Another was the emperor's nephew, John Komnenos, whose loose talk and lofty ambitions were

prompted by the growing loss of confidence in the emperor by his intimates. The real hammer blow, however, was delivered by those even closer to Alexios – his confidants, his inner circle and his immediate family. And this, in fact, is where we can truly understand the real image of the family that Anna Komnene means to present.

With the animosity towards the ruler passing the point of no return, those who had stood alongside Alexios the longest turned against him. When the Diogenes conspiracy was uncovered in the summer of 1094, the list of those implicated astonished the emperor. Few, however, are identified by name. One was Michael Taronites.<sup>49</sup> But others too had given their backing to plans to depose Alexios. One was Adrian Komnenos, who disappeared on the eve of the Crusade, banished to a monastery until his death nearly a decade later; another, presumably was Nikephoros Komnenos, for shortly afterwards we find another figure as great duke of the fleet. Yet another was Nikephoros Melissenos, who again was made to slip quietly from view, never to be seen again.<sup>50</sup> All these men had been identified by the author of the *Alexiad* as having been rewarded by the emperor in 1081. These were men who had been singled out for high office, for rewards and for status. They should have supported him; instead, they betrayed him. This is not a list of the main beneficiaries of Alexios' seizure of power, in other words. It is a rogues' gallery.

Anna Komnene was not the only one who thought that this betrayal was unforgivable. In the *typika* of the twelfth century, supposedly cornerstones of Comnenian propaganda, there are a series of notable absentees from the lists of members of the imperial families for whom prayers should be said: no Adrian, no Nikephoros, no Melissenos, no Michael Taronites. And memories ran long: the progeny of these men were kept well away from the corridors of power. The sins of the fathers were borne by the children.<sup>51</sup>

There were many others who felt that Alexios' time had come: senior officers, senators, even rank-and-file members of the army lent their support to plans to depose the emperor. Senior clergy too, such as the patriarch of Antioch, were exasperated with his style of leadership, his secrecy and his refusal to delegate responsibility, and resorted to criticizing the emperor not

only in public but to his face.<sup>52</sup> Others who had previously been impeccably loyal, such as the former empress Maria, also veered away from the ruler.<sup>53</sup> The mid-1090s, and not 1081, was the moment of regime change.

Of course the regime change that took place in the mid-1090s did not involve replacing Alexios himself. But it did lead to the wholesale replacement of an entire swathe of the aristocracy and their replacement with a new guard. The Comnenian revolution was brought about not by the dominance of the family but by the opposite: its removal.

The massive re-configuration of Byzantine society saw an entirely new group of figures propelled into the highest positions of the state. Men like Tatikios and Landulph, neither of whom were Greek born, assumed leadership roles that would scarcely have seemed credible a few years before. Alexios showed a strong inclination to revert to eunuchs, appointing men like Eustathios Kamytzes to senior positions in the imperial military. Where Alexander Kazhdan and others see only the tentacles of the imperial family, it is precisely the opposite that should surprise us: their absence. Rather than the family dominating the state, it was a new cadre of officers and officials doing exactly those jobs and discharging exactly those duties that were the most sensitive: senior command positions in the military and governors of sensitive border towns and provinces where loyalty to the emperor was of paramount importance.

The names of those who took control of western Asia Minor provide a clear indication of the scale of change. Men like Kaspax, Petzeas and Hyaleas, completely unknown before the mid-1090s, found themselves at the vanguard, recovering Smyrna and the western coast of Anatolia.<sup>54</sup> Eustathios Philokales leapt from a lowly position in the theme of Hellas to become governor of Cyprus, trusted to restore Alexios' authority after a major rebellion,<sup>55</sup> while Manuel Boutoumites found himself moving from obscurity to be named *doux* of the newly recovered Nicaea in a matter of months.<sup>56</sup>

There were a few exceptions to the purge instigated by the emperor on the eve of the Crusade – most notably John Doukas and George Palaiologos, who both doubtless owe something of their profile in the *Alexiad* to the fact

that they supported Alexios in his hour of need. But even they found themselves quietly nudged along, disappearing from view soon after the western knights made their way across Asia Minor.

This, then, was the turning point – not just of Alexios’ reign, but of the eleventh century as well. It was the failure of the Comnenian regime, and specifically of the family, that led to dramatic change in Byzantium, on a scale unprecedented in the middle Byzantine period. And this was no shuffling of the cards at the apex of the social pyramid, the replacement of one elite by another. The reforms that were ushered in were dramatic, far-reaching and revolutionary.

As had been the case with Herakleios in the seventh century, military and political realities on the ground meant that difficult decisions needed to be made if the state was to survive. The escalation of pressure in northern Asia Minor, which included the fall of Nikomedia in the early 1090s, and the failure to regain the western coastline brought radical new policies into play. One was the award of major trade concessions to Venice, almost certainly in 1092; another was the call to arms from western Europe for military support that resulted in the First Crusade.<sup>57</sup>

However, there were other significant conclusions that were reached as well. One was a clear delineation of territory in the east that was symbolically important, strategically defensible and economically valuable. A line was drawn in 1097 with the peace treaty agreed between Alexios and Kilidj Arslan.<sup>58</sup> This may not have been intended to be permanent, with the intention or rather option to extend this to the east in the future. But in 1097, the emperor’s priority was to stabilize recent gains and to regroup following effective cardiac arrest. As it happened, however, the Philomelion line crystallized into something more permanent – and as this became clear, Alexios himself recognized that drastic steps needed to be taken to protect the inhabitants to the east. The result, more dramatic for Byzantine provincial society than the Crusade or even the Turkish penetration of Asia Minor, was the evacuation of the peasant population of central Anatolia.<sup>59</sup>

As other chapters in this volume explore in detail, the eleventh century was a period that saw changes in the modes of provincial production,

particularly in the light of territorial expansion, the possibility for increased revenue collection and a sustained period of economic and demographic growth. The balance between competing factors was nowhere more pronounced than in Alexios' Byzantium, where escalating military expenditure in the 1080s clearly had a major impact on productivity of the agrarian economy as well as on the taxation system of the empire.

And in that context, perhaps the two least surprising developments in Alexios' reign – and the two most overlooked – are the following. First was the total overhaul of the relationship between the state and the elite, epitomized by the *Nea Logarike* at the end of the first decade of the twelfth century, which sought to provide a template to allow the crown to reach down not only into aristocratic estates but into small rural communities in its search for cash.<sup>60</sup> Second was the astonishing lack of cultural progress in this period: there were no signature monuments built by Alexios, no churches, aqueducts or grandiose building schemes; this was a Byzantium that was reduced to the condition it had been after the Persian attacks of the early seventh century – and what was needed was profound social and economic reform which redrew the landscape of the empire, particularly in the east.<sup>61</sup>

It was appropriate then that the only significant physical structure built in this period was for the poor, the *Orphanotropheion*, for the emperor was reaching out not to the elites in the empire but to a new class, to precisely those who had found themselves excluded from positions of authority in the eleventh century: foreigners, *mixobarbaroi*, orphans, the poor – in other words, those with no competing familial links that might draw them away from loyalty to the sovereign.<sup>62</sup>

This makes one of the few works of art known from Alexios' long reign all the more poignant. The mural of the Last Judgement at the palace speaks volumes about the realities of life under the emperor, and indeed about Byzantium at a moment of painful and difficult transition. The eleventh century ended with dramatic questions being asked about not just who should govern the empire but how it should be governed. The conspicuous failure of the emperor's family and confidants to stand by him through thick

and thin led to radical change as old ways of doing things were abandoned. Out went the opportunities for poets, humanists and intellectuals to express themselves, shut out as the curtains were drawn across a society that had to regroup if it was to survive. In came new men on the make – chief among whom were those brought in from outside by Alexios to save Byzantium in its hour of need: the Crusaders.

The First Crusade itself brought immediate rewards and welcome relief, albeit not without a price. It was only decades later, after the dust of the expedition to Jerusalem settled and antagonisms with the west began to calm that the heirs of Mauropous, Xiphilinos and Michael Psellos re-emerged onto the stage. From the mid-1090s, though, the cultural and intellectual life in Byzantium was forced into the shadows. This was a time when more practical and mundane solutions were needed to solve the problems facing the empire of Constantine. His latest heir had much to do if he were to set his house in order.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> P. Magdalino, ‘Innovations in Government’, in M. Mullett and D. Smythe, *Alexios I Komnenos: Papers* (Belfast, 1996), 148.

<sup>2</sup> A. Kazhdan, *Sotsial’nyi sostav gospodsvuyushchego klassa Vizantii, XI–XIVvv* (Moscow, 1974), 15–40; J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance 963–1210* (Paris, 1990), 359–77.

<sup>3</sup> Zonaras, *Epitome Historion*, ed. M. Pinder and T. Büttner-Wobst, *Epitome Historiarum*, 3 vols (Bonn, 1841–97), XVIII.29, vol. 3, 766–7.

<sup>4</sup> Zonaras, XVIII.20, vol. 3, 727–8; Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, ed. D. Reinsch and A. Kambylis (Berlin, 2001), III.5.ii–iii, 98–9.

<sup>5</sup> M. Angold, ‘Belle Époque or Crisis?’, in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492* (Cambridge, 2009), 610–26.

<sup>6</sup> See in general, A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zur Verwaltungsgeschichte des oströmischen Reiches unter den Komnenen* (Munich, 1965), 15–40; N. Oikonomides, ‘L’évolution de l’organisation administrative

de l'empire byzantin au XIe siècle', *TM* 6 (1976), 125–52; P. Magdalino, 'Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*', *Speculum* 58 (1983), 326–46; M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995).

[7](#) P. Sarris, Chapter 7 in the present volume.

[8](#) *Alexiad*, III.4.i–ii, 95–6; Zonaras, XVIII.21, vol. 3, 731.

[9](#) *Alexiad*, III.9.iv, 111.

[10](#) *Alexiad*, III.6.iv–viii, 101–3; Zonaras, XVIII.21, vol. 3, 731.

[11](#) For references here to Isaac and George, see B. Skoulatos, *Les personnages byzantins de l'Alexiade: analyse prosopographique et synthèse* (Louvain, 1980), 124–30, 99–105.

[12](#) P. Frankopan, 'Kinship and the Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium', *English Historical Review* 495 (2007), 1–34.

[13](#) The translation is that of P. Karlin-Hayter, 'Alexios I Komnenos: "Not in the Strict Sense of the Word an Emperor"', in Mullett and Smythe, *Alexios*, 133–4.

[14](#) P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 14.

[15](#) We learn of Zonaras' titles from some, but not all, of the manuscripts of the *Epitome*, Pinder, *Epitome*, vol. 1, xiv–v, L. Heinemann, *Quaestiones Zonarae* (Leipzig, 1895), 16–17. H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 2 vols (Munich, 1978), vol. 1, 416.

[16](#) As a starting point, see V. Liubarskii, 'Ob istochnikakh "Aleksiady" Anny Komninoi', *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 25 (1965), 99–120; also J. Howard-Johnston, 'Anna Komnene and the *Alexiad*', in Mullett and Smythe, *Alexios*, 260–302; L. Neville, 'A History of Caesar John Doukas in Nikephoros Bryennios's Material for History?', *BMGS* 32 (2008), 168–88.

[17](#) C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Cambridge, 2005), 171ff.

[18](#) P. Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the Mid-Twelfth Century in the *Alexiad*', in T. Gouma-Peterson (ed.), *Anna Komnene and Her Times* (New York, 2000), 15–43.

[19](#) *Alexiad*, III.9.i, 109–10.

[20](#) Zonaras, XVIII.21, vol. 3, 732.

[21](#) *Alexiad*, VII.1.ii, 204.

[22](#) *Alexiad*, IV.4.i, 126.

[23](#) J.-C. Cheynet, ‘Trois familles du duché d’Antioche’, in J.-C. Cheynet and P. Vannier, *Etudes prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), 66–73.

[24](#) *Alexiad*, VI.9.ii, 186–7. Also P. Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (London, 2012), 50–2.

[25](#) For Pakourianos, see Skoulatos, *Personnages*, 112–5; for Philaretos, J.-C. Cheynet, *La société byzantine: L'apport des sceaux*, 3 vols (Paris, 2008), vol. 2, 396–410; also see J. Prior and M. Jeffreys, ‘Alexios, Bohemond and Byzantium’s Euphrates Frontier: A Tale of Two Cretans’, *Crusades*, 35–40.

[26](#) Skoulatos, *Personnages*, 99–102; 245–7.

[27](#) For the significance of Alexios’ marriage to Irene Doukaina, *Alexiad*, II.7.vii, 75; for Michael’s deposition and exile, III.1.i, 87.

[28](#) *Alexiad*, VI.8.iii–v, 184–6.

[29](#) *Alexiad*, II.4.ix, 65.

[30](#) P. Frankopan, ‘Challenges to Imperial Authority in Byzantium: Revolts on Crete and Cyprus at the End of the 11th Century’, *Byz* 74 (2004), 382–402.

[31](#) J. Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (London, 2008). 232–41; B. Hill, ‘Actions Speak Louder than Words: Anna Komnene’s Attempted Usurpation’, in Gouma-Peterson, *Anna Komnene*, 47–9; D. Smythe, ‘Women as Outsiders’, in L. James (ed.) *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London, 1997), 156–62.

[32](#) *Alexiad*, VI.8.v, 185–6; XIV.3.ix, 438.

[33](#) Zonaras, XVIII.29, vol. 3, 764–6; Choniates, II, 5–10.

[34](#) Choniates, II, 11

[35](#) *Alexiad*, XV.5.iv, 475.

[36](#) *Alexiad*, XV.11.xiv, 499; also XV.11.xviii, 502; X.3.v, 289.

[37](#) *Alexiad*, IV.4.iii, 127; XI.1.vi, 324.

[38](#) *Alexiad*, III.8.vi–x, 106–9.

[39](#) *Alexiad*, II.1.i, 55.

[40](#) *Alexiad*, III.4.ii, 96.

[41](#) *Alexiad*, V.2.iii–iv, 144–5; V.9.v, 166–7; VIII.8.i–iv, 253–5; XII.6.iii, 374; XV.8.iv, 486.

[42](#) For example, *Alexiad*, VII.3.vi, 211.

[43](#) For the influences of Homer, see A. Dyck, ‘*Iliad* and *Alexiad*: Anna Comnena’s Homeric Reminiscences’, *GRBS* 27 (1986), 113–20.

[44](#) *Alexiad*, Prooimion, I.4.i, 9; VII.5.iii, 217; XV.7.viii, 484.

[45](#) *Alexiad*, XIV.8.viii, 456–7.

[46](#) J. Shepard, “‘Father’ or ‘Scorpion’? Style and Substance in Alexios’ Diplomacy”, in Mullett and Smythe, *Alexios*, 68–72

[47](#) *Alexiad*, VII.3.xii, 214; XIV.4.ii, 439; also IX.1.ii, 258.

[48](#) Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 16–22; 39.

[49](#) *Alexiad*, IX.8.ii–iv, 275–6.

[50](#) Frankopan, ‘Kinship and the Distribution of Power’, 1–34.

[51](#) Ibid., 30–2.

[52](#) P. Frankopan, ‘Where Advice meets Criticism in 11th Century Byzantium: Theophylact of Ohrid, John the Oxite and their (Re)Presentations to the Emperor’, *Al-Masaq*, 20 (2008), 71–88

[53](#) *Alexiad*, IX.2.ii, 275; also P. Frankopan, ‘Challenges to Imperial Authority in the Reign of Alexios I Komnenos: The Conspiracy of Nikephoros Diogenes’, *BSI* 64 (2006), 257–74

[54](#) *Alexiad*, XI.5.ii–iv, 336–7.

[55](#) *Alexiad*, IX.2.iv, 263; for the dating, P. Frankopan, ‘Challenges to Imperial Authority in Byzantium: Revolts on Crete and Cyprus at the End of the 11th Century’, *Byz* 74 (2004), 382–402

[56](#) *Alexiad*, XI.2.x, 329. Skoulatos’ assumptions about Boutoumites’ career, above all about dates of appointments, are misleading, *Personnages*, 181–5.

[57](#) P. Frankopan, ‘Byzantine Trade Privileges to Venice in the Eleventh Century: The Chrysobull of 1092’, *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), 135–60’; Frankopan, *First Crusade*.

[58](#) *Alexiad*, IX.3.iv, 265. For the date and context, Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 146–8.

[59](#) *Alexiad*, XV.4.iv–7.vii, 471–84

[60](#) C. Morison, ‘La logarikè: réforme monétaire et réforme fiscale sous Alexis Ier Comnène’, *TM* 7 (1979), 419–64.

[61](#) See, for example, L. Rodley, ‘The Art and Architecture of Alexios I Komnenos’, in Mullett and Smythe, *Alexios*, 339–58.

[62](#) *Alexiad*, XV.7.iii–vii, 482–5.

## Section IV

### The Age of Spirituality

## From Competition to Conformity

### Saints' lives, *typika*, and the Byzantine monastic discourse of the eleventh century

*Dirk Krausmüller*

At an earlier Spring Symposium Paul Magdalino drew attention to several highly entertaining texts by John Tzetzes and Eustathios of Thessaloniki, which criticize extreme ascetics as frauds and demand that they be shut up in coenobitic monasteries in order to be disciplined.<sup>1</sup> Magdalino pointed out that such negative attitudes are in stark contrast to the views of earlier generations and then attempted to link their appearance to the social changes that Byzantium underwent in the course of the twelfth century. In this article I will show that negative evaluations of extreme asceticism appeared much earlier, in the middle of the tenth century, and that they became widespread in the eleventh century. Moreover, I will demonstrate that such evaluations did not originate in lay society but in monastic circles, which demanded absolute conformity from all members of coenobitic communities. The new discourse affected all forms of asceticism but I will limit the discussion to fasting practices because here the evidence is particularly good. I will, of course, make use of monastic rules but my focus will be on hagiographical texts because 'lives' are more numerous than *typika* and because they were produced more or less continuously from late

antiquity onwards whereas *typika* only appeared in the tenth century. Moreover, hagiographical texts permit us to gauge the impact of the new discourse. Since they focus on outstanding figures they were long impervious to strict coenobitic ideology. Yet in the tenth and eleventh century several hagiographers felt the need to acknowledge, albeit sometimes grudgingly, the ideal of total conformity.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the ninth century the Constantinopolitan abbot Theophanes wrote the *Life* of his predecessor, the famous poet Joseph the Hymnographer.<sup>3</sup> After a few brief remarks about the saint's family and childhood he set out to chronicle his hero's rise to sainthood. The first step on this road was taken when Joseph, still an adolescent, entered a monastery in Thessaloniki. There he immediately revealed his outstanding qualities:

Καὶ τότε ἀποκαρεὶς ἐν ἀτελεῖ σώματι τὰ τῶν τελείων ἄθλα μετήρχετο, ὥστε καὶ τὸν ποιμένα θαυμάζειν καὶ τοὺς φοιτητάς, καίτοι τοῖς ἀγῶσι προγυμνασθέντας, συγκαταπλήττεσθαι ἔχρητο γὰρ νηστείαις τὴν φύσιν ὑπερβαλλούσαις, καὶ ὑπόδειγμα τοῖς ὄρῶσιν ἐγκαθιστάμενος καλόν.<sup>4</sup>

And then having been tonsured he pursued the deeds of the perfect in an imperfect body, so that the shepherd was amazed and the disciples were also astounded despite their prior training in struggles, for he engaged in fasts that exceeded nature, and by doing so became a good example for the onlookers.

It goes without saying that this passage is not an account of what really happened but rather an idealized portrayal intended to establish Joseph's saintly status. Indeed, a strikingly similar passage is already found in Kallinikos' *Life* of the fifth-century monk Hypatios of Rufinianae who spent his youth in a large coenobitic monastery.<sup>5</sup> There we read:

Τοσοῦτον δὲ ἐφήψατο τῆς ἀσκήσεως ὁ Ὑπάτιος, ὃς ὑπερβάλλεσθαι πάντας, μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ τὸν ἡγούμενον, ἐν νηστείᾳ καὶ ἀγρυπνίᾳ καὶ ψαλμῷδιᾳ καὶ εὐχῇ καὶ ὑπακοῇ καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀκτημοσύνῃ καὶ πάσῃ ἀρετῇ, ὃς πάντας ὠφελεῖσθαι παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν δοξάζεσθαι, καὶ τὸν ἡγούμενον ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν καὶ χαίρειν ἐπὶ τῇ πολιτείᾳ αὐτοῦ.<sup>6</sup>

Hypatios, however, took to ascetic practice to such a degree that he outdid all, and almost even the abbot, in fasting and waking and singing psalms and prayer and obedience and quietude and humility and lack of possessions and in every virtue, so that all profited from him and God was glorified, and the abbot loved him and rejoiced in his life-style.

Both authors evaluate the behaviour of their protagonists within a consistent framework that reflects their understanding of the ideal monastic community. In such a community individual members devise their own fasting practices and openly compete with each other. The most successful fasters are models for the others, engendering in them not only admiration but also the wish to improve their own performance. The underlying value system is of extreme simplicity: the best monk is the monk who fasts the most. Possible negative consequences of such behaviour such as pride and envy are either not considered at all or only indirectly acknowledged through brief references to the saints' humility.

The *lives* of Hypatios and Joseph testify to the extraordinary conservatism of the hagiographical discourse. A Byzantine author reproduces a template that had first been created in late antiquity and in doing so imports wholesale the ideology encapsulated in it. However, it is evident that such an approach could only be taken as long as this ideology was still being considered acceptable. This raises the question: did this consensus continue into beyond the ninth century?

At this point we need to turn to a second *Life* of Joseph the Hymnographer, which was written towards the end of the eleventh century by the patriarchal deacon John the Rhetor.<sup>7</sup> This text is a *metaphrasis* of Theophanes' ninth-century *vita*. The authors of such works usually content themselves with rewriting older narratives in a higher style, and at first it seems that this is also the approach taken by John because the description of Joseph's fasting is reproduced in all its essentials. However, here the episode does not end with a reference to the community's positive response to the saint's extreme asceticism. Instead, the audience is told that Joseph incurred the criticism of his abbot and that he changed his behaviour accordingly:

Ἄμελει καὶ πάντα τρόπον ὑπείκειν μεμαθηκώς καὶ κατὰ μηδὲν ἀντιλέγειν τοῖς αὐτὸν ἐνάγουσιν εἰς ταπείνωσιν τὸ προστεταγμένον ἐποίει καὶ τῶν προκειμένων ἐφήπτετο, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ συλλογιζόμενος καὶ ποιῶν.<sup>8</sup>

Then he who had learnt to yield in all ways and to contradict in no way those who led him to humility did what he had been ordered and partook of what lay before him, reasoning and doing everything to the glory of God.

Here we are informed that Joseph ate from the food that was put on the table. This is evidently a reference to the dishes that were served in monastic refectories. As we know from contemporary rules the nature and number of these dishes varied throughout the year according to a fixed pattern. Such dietary regulations were, of course, already in existence when Kallinikos and Theophanes wrote their *lives*. However, neither author makes mention of them, which suggests that they regarded the common diet merely as a minimum standard that every good monk should exceed. By contrast, John the Rhetor accords this diet a positive value because by partaking of it a monk demonstrates that he does not follow his own will and that he is not prideful.

This raises the question: why did John modify his model in this manner? In order to find an answer we need to turn to the *Testament* of the abbot John for the monastery of Petra, which dates to the late eleventh or early twelfth century.<sup>9</sup> This text contains the following stipulation:

Οὐκ ἔξ[ε]στι δέ τινι εἴδους οἰουδήποτε τῶν ἐν τῇ τραπέζῃ παρατιθεμένων ἀπέχεσθαι – ἐκτὸς δηλονότι σωματικῆς ἀρρωστίας – ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπαντας ἐσθίειν καὶ μηδενὸς τῶν τῷ κοινῷ προ[σ]φ[ε]ρομένων δι' εὐλάβειαν ἢ ἄλλο τι ἀπέχεσθαι.<sup>10</sup>

It is not permitted to anyone to abstain from any item that is set before him – apart from physical illness – but all must eat everything and not abstain out of caution or some other reason from anything that has been offered up to the community.

Here, too, it is stipulated that all monks should eat from the dishes that are put before them. Moreover, the meaning of this rule is then clarified through a string of quotations from late antique texts. The author first reproduces a passage from Basil's *Rules*, which disqualifies attempts to design an individual and more demanding fasting practice as signs of disobedience,<sup>11</sup> and then adds a saying from the *Klimax*: 'Become like your brothers and not unlike them through pride' (γίνου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου ὅμοιος καὶ μήτιγε οἱήσει ἀνόμοιος).<sup>12</sup> It is not difficult to see why this last text appealed to the author. Isolated from its original context, it seems to imply that whenever a monk deviates from the norm he does so because he considers himself better than the other members of the community. Thus it undermines the

traditional view that more rigorous fasting is permissible as long as the faster shows humility. As a consequence humility can only be demonstrated through conformity. Eating from all dishes becomes the litmus test for proper monastic conduct.

John of Petra's text gives the impression as if all differences between monks had disappeared. This, however, was not quite the case as is evident from Empress Irene Doukaina's *Typikon* for the Kecharitomene convent.<sup>13</sup> Here the nuns are told that they must take from all dishes but that they only need to eat a morsel from each one.<sup>14</sup> This qualification shows clearly that whoever wished to do so could still observe a relatively harsh dietary regime. However, we should not for this reason regard the impact of the new practice as negligible. From Irene's *typikon* it is clear that traditionally nuns, and without doubt also monks, stayed away from the refectory when they did not wish to eat. Such withdrawal is now no longer possible. Moreover, we need to remember that eating only very few types of dishes or altogether abstaining from any food for days or even weeks were the traditional hallmarks of sanctity. A monk who ate every day however little that might be could no longer claim to have achieved such feats.

Written in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, John's *Testament* for Petra and the Kecharitomene *Typikon* evidently reflect a contemporary discourse about the proper conduct of coenobitic monks. There can be little doubt that John the Rhetor was influenced by this discourse when he rewrote the ninth-century *Life* of Joseph. This is not to say that there are no differences between the texts: John lets his hero return to a more austere lifestyle once he has demonstrated his obedience and humility whereas the authors of monastic rules insist that this behaviour should be observed at all times. However, this should not detract from the significance of John's decision to include the topic at all. In the fifth century and even more so in the ninth century there was no shortage of discursive and normative texts such as catecheses, letters and spiritual chapters that advocated a strict coenobitic lifestyle. However, these texts had no perceptible influence on Kallinikos and Theophanes, the authors of the *lives* of Hypatios and Joseph.

This raises the question: when did this crossover occur for the first time? A survey of the surviving texts shows that with its emphasis on extreme and competitive asceticism the first *Life* of Joseph the Hymnographer is representative of ninth-century hagiography. The revival of coenobitic monasticism around the year 800 is not reflected in the lives of its main protagonists: the abbots Theophanes of Agros, Niketas of Medikion and Makarios of Pelekete are all presented as extreme fasters.<sup>15</sup> Thus it comes as no surprise that post-iconoclastic lives of coenobitic monks adhere to the same template.<sup>16</sup> The most extreme example was produced by a monk of Stoudios shortly after the year 900. It is the *Life* of Euarestos, abbot of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Kokorobion, who started his monastic career at Stoudios during the abbacy of Theodore's immediate successor Naukratios.<sup>17</sup> There we are told that the young Euarestos and his mentor Eubiotos outdid all other monks with their spectacular ascetic feats, which brought them to the verge of suicide.<sup>18</sup>

However, in the following decades attitudes at Stoudios appear to have undergone a radical change. This is evident from two Stoudite texts that can be dated to the second quarter of the tenth century, *Vita C* of Theodore of Stoudios and the *Life* of Blaise of Amorion.<sup>19</sup> *Vita C* is a *metaphrasis* of an earlier text, *Vita B*.<sup>20</sup> The author of *Vita B*, Michael the Monk, makes the usual claim that Theodore's fasting practice as a young monk provided a model for the rest of the community. However, he then supplies us with no concrete information but simply states that Theodore ate enough to ensure that his health would not suffer.<sup>21</sup> When the author of *Vita C* produced his *metaphrasis* he was clearly dissatisfied with the vagueness of his model for he added the comment:

Καὶ τοῖς παρατιθεμένοις ἔστιν ὅτε πᾶσιν ἐχρῆτο καὶ τούτων μικρὸν ἀπεγεύετο ώς μὴ δοκεῖν ἀπεμφαίνουσαν ἔχειν τὴν ἀσκησιν.<sup>22</sup>

And sometimes he used all the things that were set before him and ate from them a little lest he appear to be incongruous in his asceticism.

It is immediately evident that this addition reflects exactly the same position that we have found in the texts from the late eleventh century. Conformity

is demonstrated through partaking of the common monastic diet. Just as Joseph in his eleventh-century *Life*, Theodore shows this behaviour only occasionally, undoubtedly because the author felt constrained by the traditional model of sanctity, which was closely linked to extraordinary feats of asceticism.

The tension between the ideal of conformity and hagiographical tradition is even more obvious in the *Life* of Blaise of Amorion, which was composed by an anonymous Stoudite monk. Having stated that Blaise entered the Lavra of Kaisarios in Rome the hagiographer describes the saint's eating habits in the following manner:

'Ως ἂν δὲ μὴ δόξει τοῖς πολλοῖς ὑπερέχειν αὐτῶν [αὐτὸν] τῷ φρονήματι μετρίως δ' ἐπίσης εἶναι τοῖς ὁμοταγέσι βουλόμενος ἥσθιεν ἄπαξ τῆς ἡμέρας βραχύ τι μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου δύσιν ἀπογευόμενος.<sup>23</sup>

But lest he appear to the many to exceed them as regards his attitude, and wishing to be moderately equal to those who had the same rank as he, he ate once a day, tasting a little after sunset.

This is a very curious passage. On the one hand, the hagiographer refers to the same notions as the author of *Vita C*. Here, too, we find a focus on conformity and humility and a concern about the negative impact that unusual behaviour could have on others. On the other hand, however, he clearly strives to minimize the impact of these notions on Blaise's lifestyle. Significantly, he qualifies the term ἐπίσης through the adverb μετρίως, thus indicating that in Blaise's case the conformity is not complete. This is borne out by the following description of the saint's dietary regime. There is no indication that Blaise regularly went to the refectory or that he ate the same food as his fellow monks. The only concession that the hagiographer makes to the new ideal of conformity is that Blaise does not engage in longer fasts but eats every day. Even this difference, however, is played down because the hagiographer tells us that before he entered the monastery Blaise ate only every other or third day and sometimes even only once a week.<sup>24</sup> The point that the author is making is clear: Blaise could well have fasted more

but he did not do so out of concern for the other members of the community.

That Blaise's hagiographer emphasized the asceticism of his hero more than the author of *Vita C* did is hardly surprising because, unlike Theodore, Blaise was a new saint whose status had yet to be established. The author clearly felt that this could only be done within the framework of extreme asceticism. Much more significant, however, is the fact that he nevertheless felt the need to acknowledge the view that such asceticism is socially disruptive. After all, he could simply have reproduced the old notion that it had a positive impact on others. That he did not do so is a clear sign that at Stoudios the new ideal of conformity had become firmly established.

However, it needs to be emphasized that in the tenth century the Stoudite texts are quite exceptional. Other lives of the time give no indication that extreme and agonistic asceticism might have been considered problematic. Michael Maleinos, Luke the Stylite, Luke of Hellas, Paul of Latros, Nikephoros of Miletos and Phantinos the Younger are all presented as heroic fasters.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the same attitude is reflected in the rules of Athanasios the Athonite and Paul of Latros where monks are encouraged to fast according to their desire and physical strength, provided they first ask the abbot for his permission.<sup>26</sup>

In the course of the tenth century the Stoudios monastery also produced normative texts, first the brief Stoudite *Hypotyposis* and then the much more voluminous Stoudite *Typikon*.<sup>27</sup> Thus one might expect that these rules contained programmatic statements about the ideal of conformity. However, this is not the case.<sup>28</sup> There is only one text that mentions the requirement to eat from all dishes, the *Ascetic Chapters* of Symeon the Pious, the spiritual father of Symeon the New Theologian, which dates to the last quarter of the tenth century.<sup>29</sup> Yet this text is clearly of a non-official nature and moreover shows no interest in strictly regulated community life. If a normative text did indeed exist it must now be considered lost. Thus we can only reconstruct the debate from the two hagiographical sources in which it is reflected.

This situation changes radically in the eleventh century when conformity becomes one of the main themes in Constantinopolitan *typika*. The first rule promoting the new ideology was produced at the monastery of Panagios, which had been founded by monks from Athanasios' Lavra on Mt Athos.<sup>30</sup> It can be dated to the years between 1000 and 1025 and was most likely written by the abbot Anthony.<sup>31</sup> The text has not survived in its original form but can be reconstructed from a later adaptation, the *Typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately Pakourianos' text is often so garbled as to be unintelligible. However, we can still see that the Panagios *Typikon* contained an astonishingly aggressive invective against monks who impose on themselves 'the great ... abstinences' (τὰς μεγάλας ... ἐγκρατείας). Such monks are criticized for their disobedience.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, it is claimed that mortification of the body is no virtue in the strict sense of the word and that the true purpose of monastic life is the reformation of manners and the acquisition of humility.<sup>34</sup> In its present form the text makes no mention of the rule that monks should eat from all dishes. However, there are clear references to the ideal of conformity on which this rule is based. At one point monks are warned that they will fall prey to demons if they engage in ostentatious asceticism 'in order to persuade the onlookers ... that they are unlike others' (πρὸς τὸ τοὺς ὄρῶντας πείθειν ... ὅτι ἄλλοις ἀνόμοιοί εἰσι).<sup>35</sup> This phrase bears a striking resemblance to John Klimakos' saying: 'Become like your brothers and not unlike them through pride' (γίνου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου ὅμοιος καὶ μήτιγε οἱήσει ἀνόμοιος), which is quoted in John's *Testament for Petra*. This leaves no doubt that the author of the Panagios *Typikon* participated in the new discourse.

The Panagios *Typikon* and the two later rules for the Petra monastery and the Kecharitomene convent can therefore be interpreted as expressions of a broad reform discourse that had left the confines of Stoudios and had spread to other Constantinopolitan monastic milieus. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that this discourse now ruled supreme. One of the most colourful monastic figures of the early eleventh century, the mystic Symeon the New Theologian, seems to have remained entirely aloof. Symeon never wrote a rule in the strict sense of the word but in one of his *Catecheses* he

described how an individual monk should behave in the course of the day. This text contains also a section about the refectory. There Symeon warns his addressee not to fall prey to the vice of gluttony but he does not demand that he eat from all dishes.<sup>36</sup> This is no accidental oversight because nowhere in his writings does Symeon make reference to the ideal of conformity. There can be no doubt that this was a conscious choice because as a former member of its community Symeon must have had an intimate knowledge of monastic life at Stoudios. One likely reason for this refusal is his focus on the personal relationship between spiritual father and disciple, which left no room for abstract rules.<sup>37</sup> Symeon's monastic vision was kept alive in the second half of the eleventh century by another Stoudite monk, Niketas Stethatos, who considered himself his spiritual son.<sup>38</sup> Niketas not only disseminated Symeon's writings but also produced numerous works of his own, which equally ignore the ideal of conformity.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, we know that Niketas presented himself to the public as a 'holy man' of a very traditional cut.<sup>40</sup>

The evidence discussed so far might suggest that the discourse of conformity never became predominant in eleventh-century Constantinople. However, we have yet to consider another cluster of texts, which were produced at the monastery of Evergetis in the third quarter of the eleventh century.<sup>41</sup> The Evergetis *Typikon* gives monks the permission to stay away from the refectory if they wished to fast, which leaves no doubt that the Evergetis monastery was another locus of opposition.<sup>42</sup> However, unlike Symeon and Niketas the abbots of Evergetis did not pass over the new development in silence. Paul of Evergetis produced a voluminous spiritual handbook called *Synagogue* in which he assembled a great number of patristic passages in support of a more rigorous fasting practice.<sup>43</sup> This must be understood as a response to the custom of the proponents of the discourse of conformity to support their position through carefully selected proof texts, which gave the impression that they were simply implementing the teachings of the Fathers.<sup>44</sup> That Paul of Evergetis felt the need for such a detailed refutation suggests strongly that the discourse of conformity had

gained widespread acceptance. Further support for this hypothesis comes from the Kecharitomene *Typikon*. This text is based on the Evergetis *Typikon*.<sup>45</sup> However, it suppresses the passage that permits fasters to stay in their cells and puts in its place the command to come to the refectory and eat from all dishes. This shows that to the redactor of the Kecharitomene *Typikon* at least the new discourse represented the mainstream and its detractors had become marginal figures.

At this point we need to ask: how is this development reflected in eleventh-century saints' lives? This question is all the more relevant since in the eleventh century hagiographical production is closely linked to the production of *typika*. The monks of Petra composed a *Life* of Abbot John, and at Panagios the abbot Anthony not only wrote a rule but also a *Life* of Athanasios whom he considered to be the true founding father of his community.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, both texts are lost in their original form. However, the *Life* of John was later rewritten by Patriarch Kallistos of Constantinople,<sup>47</sup> and Anthony's text, Kazhdan's *Vita prima*, is preserved almost unchanged in the Lavriot *Vita B* of Athanasios.<sup>48</sup> Thus we can still see that stipulations from the normative texts are integrated into the two hagiographical narratives.<sup>49</sup> This extraordinarily close relationship between the two genres can even be found in the third surviving text, Niketas Stethatos' *Life* of Symeon, because it contains a paraphrase of the *catechesis* in which Symeon had described the daily routine of a monk.<sup>50</sup> In what follows the three texts will be analysed in greater detail.

When one reads the *Encomium* of Abbot John one is in for a surprise because Patriarch Kallistos introduces the saint with the sobriquet 'the Faster' (ὁ νηστευτής) and then claims that he ate just enough to keep alive.<sup>51</sup> A very similar statement is then found in the description of the saint's early monastic career.<sup>52</sup> By contrast, there are no references at all to conformity or to eating from all dishes. Of course, we cannot be certain that Kallistos is in these instances faithful to his model. It is entirely possible that the text reflects his own preferences. However, when we turn to the *Vita prima* of

Athanasiос, which is much better preserved, it becomes obvious that rule and life were not as close a fit as one might expect.

Athanasiос' hagiographer gives a detailed account of the saint's conduct as a layman, which includes a description of his harsh ascetic practices.<sup>53</sup> This theme is then taken up again in the narration of the saint's entry into the monastery of Michael Maleinos. There we are told that Athanasiос wished to eat only once a week but that Abbot Michael refused to grant permission and instead told him to eat every third day.<sup>54</sup> This is evidently the same scenario that we have already encountered in the *Life* of Blaise of Amorion. By stating that Athanasiос engaged in extreme asceticism before he entered the monastic life, the hagiographer can claim that the saint could have conformed to the traditional template of sainthood and that he did not do so only because such a lifestyle would have been irreconcilable with coenobitic monasticism. Significantly, the *lives* of Blaise and of Athanasiос are the first hagiographical texts that present their heroes as ascetics while they are still living in the world. In earlier lives we find at best a few remarks about the saints' piety.<sup>55</sup> This is clear evidence that the new discourse had an impact on the hagiographical genre. At the same time, however, we notice that the ideal of conformity is not fully implemented. While it can be inferred from the context that Athanasiос ate the same food as all other monks he did not do so daily and thus fasted more than an ordinary member of the community. There can be little doubt that the author was here bowing to hagiographical convention, which required a saint to be an exceptional figure. However, this has the consequence that Athanasiос cannot serve as a model for ordinary members of the community.

The hagiographer' solution to this problem was to introduce another figure whose lifestyle met the criteria of the new discourse. The *Life* of Athanasiос contains an episode where a hermit called Nikephoros comes to the saint and wishes to join the Lavra because he is too old to live on his own.<sup>56</sup> Until then Nikephoros had contented himself with one evening meal consisting of bran soaked in tepid water. Instead of leaving him to his own devices as was customary at the time Athanasiос weaned him off this diet

and ‘changed his whole lifestyle to that of the coenobites’ ( $\tauὴν ὅλην αὐτοῦ διαγωγὴν εἰς τὴν τῶν κοινοβιακῶν κατήλλαξεν$ ).<sup>57</sup> Soon afterwards Nikephoros died. When the monks later opened his tomb in order to move his corpse to a new graveyard they found that it had exuded fragrant oil.<sup>58</sup> This episode is highly significant. Nikephoros’ story is the reversal of a traditional monastic career where monks first live in a coenobitic monastery and then become hermits. The appearance of fragrant oil was considered to be marker of sainthood.<sup>59</sup> However, it was widely believed that such a phenomenon could only appear in the case of extreme ascetics who had persevered in their chosen lifestyle until their death.<sup>60</sup> By challenging this view the author makes the case that conformity to the common rule was not an obstacle to sainthood. There can be little doubt that this episode was directly addressed to the monks of Panagios who were expected to take Nikephoros as a model.<sup>61</sup>

No such inconsistencies are found in the *Life* of Symeon the New Theologian. True to his convictions the hagiographer Niketas Stethatos only states that when the saint was a novice at Stoudios his spiritual father did not let him follow his own will and makes no mention of a fixed dietary regime.<sup>62</sup> Curiously, however, Niketas does acknowledge the new ideal of conformity in another context. He claims that the saint’s favourite disciple Arsenios rejected the Lenten fare that was served in the refectory and imposed on himself a harsher regime against Symeon’s counsel.<sup>63</sup> As a consequence he fainted during a vigil and was forced to eat food then and there. Symeon then addressed him with the words: ‘If you had been in all things like the brothers you would not have suffered something unlike in their midst during the vigil’ ( $εἰ ὅμοιος κατὰ πάντα ἥσθα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἀνόμοιόν τι μέσον τούτων ἐν ἀγρυπνίᾳ οὐκ ἀν ἔπαθες$ ).<sup>64</sup> This is clearly another variation of John Klimakos’ saying, which appears to have become the slogan of the proponents of the ideal of conformity. Indeed, the similarity is even further emphasized when Symeon then accuses Arsenios of ‘pride’ ( $οἵησις$ ). However, this does not mean that Niketas has changed his mind because in the context he makes it quite clear that extreme fasting is

laudable.<sup>65</sup> Arsenios' mistake was merely to engage in it without due preparation and against the will of his abbot. This raises the question: why did Niketas integrate the saying from the *Klimax* into his text? It is possible that he simply wished to show that it was open to more than one interpretation. However, the fact that he inserted it into a story about a disciple of the saint is intriguing. As we have seen Athanasios' hagiographer uses a subsidiary figure in order to provide his monks with a model for imitation, thereby creating a contrast with the saint who engages in more strenuous asceticism. Niketas, on the other hand, creates a strict parallel between saint and subsidiary figure. Thus one may wonder whether he did not wish to poke fun at the inconsistencies of the reformers.

From the discussion so far it is evident that in the eleventh century the new discourse had become embedded in the hagiographical genre. References to it appear in all surviving Constantinopolitan saints' lives. This is in striking contrast to the hagiographical production of the previous period. However, at the same time it is obvious that its impact varied considerably. Only one hagiographer, John the Rhetor, followed the lead of the Stoudite authors of the tenth century and attempted to apply the new template to the saint himself albeit in a modified form that left room for ascetic prowess. It is undoubtedly no coincidence that this text was devoted to a long-dead saint whose reputation was already established. Anthony of Panagios who had to make the case that his hero was indeed a saint instead decided to present Athanasios as an extreme faster and then introduced a subsidiary figure in order to demonstrate the need for conformity. Niketas Stethatos, on the other hand, seems to have quoted the movement's favourite slogan only to subvert it or even to ridicule it.

The discourse about conformity continued without break into the twelfth century. This can be seen from the case of the abbot Meletios of Myoupolis who lived during the reign of Alexios I but became the subject of a *Life* only in the middle of the twelfth century when the bishop Nicholas of Methone took up the pen.<sup>66</sup> This text contains a lengthy discussion of Meletios' diet, which ends with the following statement:

Πᾶσι μὲν οὖν ἐξῆν τῶν παρατιθεμένων μεταλαμβάνειν, καθ' ὅσον καὶ προηρεῖτο ἔκαστος· ὁ δὲ τοσοῦτον ἀπεγεύετο μόνον, ὅσον μήτε νηστεύων δόξαι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀποζῆν δύνασθαι.<sup>67</sup>

All, then, were permitted to partake of what had been served, as much as each one wanted. But he tasted only so much that he did not seem to fast to the brothers and could survive.

These lines reflect the same opposition to showy and extreme asceticism that we found in the rules of the Petra and Kecharitomene monasteries. Significantly, however, we also encounter, for the first time in hagiographical literature, overt criticism of the ideal of conformity. It is expressed in the *Life* of the hermit Cyril of Philea by the monk Nicholas Kataskepenos, which equally dates to the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>68</sup> Like Niketas Stethatos, Nicholas has no qualms about presenting his saint as an ascetic. When Cyril was still a monk in his brother's monastery, he came to the refectory but did not eat with the brothers but instead told them stories from the lives of the saints.<sup>69</sup> However, Nicholas, too, was well aware that such a lifestyle had come under attack. Therefore he inserted into his narrative one confrontation between the saint and a representative of the new discourse. We are told that Pecheneg raids once forced Cyril to seek refuge in a coenobitic monastery where his harsh dietary regime and his refusal to eat with the community angered the abbot.<sup>70</sup> According to Nicholas the abbot berated him in the following manner:

Τὸ δὲ εἶναί σου ὄλον τὸν βίον παρηλλαγμένον ἐξ ἡμῶν πρόδηλόν σε ποιεῖ οἰηματικόν. Εἰ οὖν δέχῃ με σύμβουλον, γενοῦ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς σου ὅμοιος καὶ μὴ τῇ οἰήσει ὀνόμοιος. Τὰ γὰρ ὑψηλά, ὡς οἱ πατέρες εἴπον, τῶν δαιμόνων εἰσί.<sup>71</sup>

The fact that your whole life is different from us shows clearly that you are prideful. If you take me as counsellor, become like your brothers and not unlike them through pride. For lofty things, as the Fathers said, belong to the demons.

This argument is, of course, already familiar to us. The abbot extols the virtue of conformity and even quotes the saying from the *Klimax* that had become the slogan of the proponents of the new discourse. Indeed, the abbot's speech then continues with further passages from the Fathers that make the same point. Such concatenation of quotations is a typical feature of the *Life* of Cyril where many aspects of monastic life are dealt with in the

form of extensive florilegia. However, in most other cases these florilegia are put into the mouth of Cyril who corrects others and instructs them about proper monastic conduct.<sup>72</sup> By contrast, here it is another figure who attempts to correct and instruct Cyril. At this point one might expect Cyril to reply in the same way and to offer quotations from the Fathers that support his own way of life, just as Paul of Evergetis had done a few decades earlier. However, this is not the case. Instead Nicholas focuses on the motivations of the abbot. Already at the beginning of the episode he claims that ‘the ... most evil devil obscured the mind of the abbot of the monastery against the saint with the darkness of envy and vainglory’ (ό ... παγκάκιστος διάβολος ἐζόφωσε τῷ σκότει τοῦ φθόνου καὶ τῆς κενῆς δόξης τὸν λογισμὸν τοῦ προεστῶτος τῆς μονῆς κατὰ τοῦ ὄστου). Later we hear that this was the case because visitors of the monastery would go to Cyril rather than to the abbot despite the fact that the saint ‘was not ordained and a rustic’ (ἀνίερον ὅντα καὶ ιδιώτην).<sup>73</sup> Thus Nicholas gives the impression as if the abbot used the ideal of conformity merely as a pretext to cut down to size a charismatic figure whose extraordinary feats he could not emulate. At the same time the abbot appears to be a snob because he belittles Cyril for being uneducated. There can be no doubt that in this instance Nicholas sets out his own views on the issue.<sup>74</sup> Yet it seems not unlikely that the scenario he depicts reflects the opinions of hermits like Cyril. To them the new discourse may well have appeared as a clever trick that their adversaries employed in order to justify their own lax regime and to control their social inferiors. Under these circumstances a dialogue must have been virtually impossible. It is true that Nicholas resolves the conflict between Cyril and the abbot. He claims that the saint reacted to the criticism with such extravagant self-recrimination that the abbot was assured of his humility and even offered an apology for his previous behaviour.<sup>75</sup> However, it is highly doubtful that such a scene would ever have taken place. As we have seen the proponents of the ideal of conformity insisted that extreme asceticism was always motivated by pride. This suggests that they would have dismissed Cyril’s tears as hypocrisy.

The evidence that I have presented in this article shows that the ideal of absolute conformity made its first appearance in two Stoudite *lives* from the second quarter of the tenth century. From the beginning of the eleventh century it then started spreading to other Constantinopolitan monastic communities where it is reflected in both rules and hagiographical texts. As we have seen this did not mean that everybody accepted the new ideal. However, even those who were unhappy about it felt the need to engage with it. Thus we must ask: why had the old ideal of extreme and agonistic asceticism become problematic? One could argue that for Byzantium the tenth and eleventh centuries were a period of stability, which gave a boost to coenobitic monasticism in places like Mt Athos and Mt Latros. Yet this explanation seems insufficient because the new discourse started in the capital where coenobitic communities had already existed for centuries. Nor can one argue that the new ideal was imposed on monasticism from the outside because the evidence shows clearly that it was first defined within monastic circles and only at a second stage adopted by members of the lay church such as John the Rhetor and by laypeople such as John Tzetzes. This suggests that the changes were of a more fundamental nature. The monastic community was a reflection of what Byzantine society at large considered to be the perfect way of life. Thus one can hypothesize that the developments within monasticism were part of a broader process of social change. However, then one runs into difficulties because nobody has as yet argued that in the eleventh century Byzantine society came to appreciate community and conformity rather than individualism and competition. Indeed, most scholars seem to think that the opposite was the case. Should one therefore conclude that the drive towards greater conformity was a reaction to growing individualism in lay society? This interpretation seems also far-fetched and can in any case not be substantiated. There is only one way to overcome this impasse, a thoroughgoing comparison between monastic communities and other social institutions such as the family, the corporation and above all the imperial bureaucracy. Such an approach, however, will only become possible if students of Byzantine religion start a dialogue with scholars working on secular society and culture.

# Notes

- [1](#) P. Magdalino, ‘The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century’, in S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (London, 1981), 51–66.
- [2](#) Much of the material analysed below is discussed in D. Krausmüller, ‘The Abbots of Evergetis as Opponents of “Monastic Reform”: A Re-appraisal of the Monastic Discourse in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Constantinople’, *REB* 69 (2011), 111–34. However, this earlier article had the more limited purpose of showing that there was no such thing as an ‘Evergetine reform movement’.
- [3](#) *Life of Joseph* by Theophanes, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Monumenta graeca et latina ad historiam Photii patriarchae pertinentia*, II (St Petersburg, 1901), 1–14.
- [4](#) *Life of Joseph* by Theophanes, 3.17–21.
- [5](#) *Life of Hypatios*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink, *Callinicos, Vie d'Hypatios* (SC 177, Paris, 1971).
- [6](#) *Life of Hypatios*, 3.12, ed. Bartelink, 84
- [7](#) *Life of Joseph* by John, *PG* 105, col. 940–76. On John see D. Krausmüller, ‘The Abbots of Evergetis’, 124.
- [8](#) *Life of Joseph* by John, 11, col. 949B1–7.
- [9](#) *Testament* of John, ed. G. Turco, ‘La *diatheke* del fondatore del monastero di S. Giovanni Prodromo in Petra e l’Ambr. E 9 Sup.’, *Aevum* 75 (2001), 327–80. The text was written shortly after 1111, see Turco, ‘La *diatheke*’, 342.
- [10](#) *Testament* of John, ed. Turco, 357.256–60.
- [11](#) Basil of Caesara, *Regulae brevius tractatae*, 158, *PG* 31, col. 1173A3–5. See also *Regulae fusius tractatae*, 18, *PG* 31, col. 965A10: ὅτι δεῖ πάντων τῶν παρατίθεμένων ἡμῖν ἀπογεύεσθαι.
- [12](#) John Klimakos, *Klimax*, gradus 4, *PG* 88, col. 713A6–8. As is well known the *Klimax* as a whole is not a particularly ‘coenobitic’ text.
- [13](#) Kecharitomene *Typikon*, ed. P. Gautier, ‘Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôménè’, *REB* 43 (1985), 5–165.
- [14](#) Kecharitomene *Typikon*, 51, ed. Gautier, 101.1472–5.

- 15 *Life of Theophanes* 26, 43, ed. V.V. Latyšev, *Methodii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Vita S. Theophanis Confessoris* (Zapiski rossijkoj akademii nauk, viii. ser. po istoriko-filologičeskomu otdeleniju, 13.4; Petrograd, 1918), 18, 27; *Life of Niketas*, 9, 16, ed. Hagiographi Bollandiani, *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, I (Paris, 1866), xviii–xxvii, esp. xx–xxi; *Life of Makarios*, 4, ed. Anonymous, ‘S. Macarii monasterii Peleceres hegumeni acta graeca’, *AnBoll* 16 (1897), 142–63, esp. 147.
- 16 *Life of Euthymios the Younger*, 17, ed. L. Petit, ‘Vie et office de saint Euthyme le Jeune’, *ROC* 8 (1903), 155–205, 503–27, esp. 182–3; *Life of Constantine the Ex-Jew*, 16, ed. H. Delehaye, *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, IV (Brussels, 1925), 627–56, esp. 632F. *Life of Patriarch Ignatios*, *PG* 105, col. 488–574, esp. col. 496A, *Life of Anthony Kauleas*, 8, ed. P.L.M. Leone, ‘L’ “Encomium in Patriarcham Antonium II Cauleam” del filosofo e retore Niceforo’, *Orpheus* 10 (1989), 404–29, esp. 418. An exception to the rule is the *Life of Eustratios*, which makes no reference to the saint’s dietary regime, cf. *Life of Eustratios of Agauroi*, 6, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Άναλεκτα ιεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας, IV (St Petersburg, 1897), 367–400, esp. 372.
- 17 *Life of Euarestos*, ed. C. Van de Vorst, ‘La vie de s. Évariste, higoumène à Constantinople’, *AnBoll* 41 (1923), 287–325.
- 18 *Life of Euarestos*, 9, ed. Van de Vorst, 303–4.
- 19 *Life of Blaise*, 19, ed. H. Delehaye, *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, IV (Brussels, 1925), 657–69. On Blaise see H. Grégoire, ‘La vie de Blaise d’Amorium’, *Byz* 5 (1929–30), 391–414.
- 20 *Vita C of Theodore*, 11, ed. V. Latyšev, ‘Vita s. Theodori Studitae in codice Mosquensi musei Rumianzovani no. 520’, *VV* 21 (1914), 258–304. See D. Krausmüller, ‘*Vitae B, C and A of Theodore the Stoudite: Their Interrelation, Dates, Authors and Significance for the History of the Stoudios Monastery in the Tenth Century*’, *AnBoll* 131 (2013), 280–98.
- 21 *Vita B of Theodore*, 8, *PG* 99, col. 113–232, esp. col. 244D.
- 22 *Vita C of Theodore*, ed. Latyšev, 264.13–15.
- 23 *Life of Blaise*, 14, ed. Delehaye, 664A.
- 24 *Life of Blaise*, 10, ed. Delehaye, col. 662C–D.
- 25 *Life of Michael*, 25, ed. L. Petit, ‘Vie de saint Michel Maléinos, suivie du traité ascétique de Basile Maléinos’, *ROC* 7 (1902), 543–92, esp. 568; *Life of Luke the Stylite*, 5, ed. A. Vogt, ‘Vie de S. Luc le Stylite’, *AnBoll* 28 (1909), 4–56; esp. 18; *Life of Luke of Hellas*, 7, ed. D.Z. Sophianos, Ὅσιος Λουκᾶς. Ό βίος τοῦ ὁσίου Λουκᾶ τοῦ Στειριώτη. Προλεγόμενα, μετάφραση, κριτικὴ ἔκδοση τοῦ

*κειμένου* (Athens, 1989), 159–223, esp. 162–3, *Life of Paul of Latros* 9, ed. H. Delehaye, ‘Vita s. Pauli junioris’, in T. Wiegand, *Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899*, III.1: *Der Latmos* (Berlin, 1913), 105–35, esp. 110–11; *Life of Nikephoros*, 8, ed. H. Delehaye, ‘Vita s. Nicephori’, *AnBoll* 14 (1895), 129–66, esp. 140; *Life of Phantinos*, 7, ed. E. Follieri, *La Vita di San Fantino il Giovane. Subsidia Hagiographica*, 77 (Brussels, 1993), 408. By contrast, the hagiographer of Peter of Argos volunteers no information about the saint’s dietary regime, see *Life of Peter*, ed. K. Kyriakopoulos, *Άγιου Πέτρου ἐπισκόπου Ἀργους βίος καὶ λόγοι* (Athens, 1976), 232–54.

<sup>26</sup> *Hypotyposis* of Athanasios, ed. P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster* (Leipzig, 1894), 138.22–4; *Testament* of Paul of Latros, ed. S. Lampros, ‘Διαθήκη Παύλου τοῦ Λατρηνοῦ’, *NE* 15 (1915), 201.33–4.

<sup>27</sup> *Hypotyposis* of Stoudios, PG 99, col. 1704–20. The Stoudite *Typikon* is lost in its original and must be reconstructed from later adaptations, see D. Krausmüller and O. Grinchenko, ‘The Tenth-Century Stoudios-Typikon and its Impact on Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantine Monasticism’, *JÖB* 63 (2013), 153–75.

<sup>28</sup> In the case of the Stoudite *Hypotyposis* one can at best construe an argument from silence since the reference to individual fasting regimes that is found in Athanasius’ adaptation of this text is missing in the original. There is a garbled reference to the requirement that all monks must eat from all dishes in the Church Slavonic translation of one of the adaptations of the Stoudios *Typikon*, the rule of the monastic foundation of Patriarch Alexius, see A. M. Pentkovskij, *Tipikon patriarha Aleksija Studita v Bizantii i na Rusi* (Moscow 2001), 373–4. However, this passage does not appear in other adaptations. Therefore we cannot be certain that it was part of the Stoudios *Typikon*.

<sup>29</sup> Symeon the Pious, *Ascetic Chapters*, 25, 28, ed. H. Alfeyev, *Syméon le Studite, Discours Ascétique* (SC, 460, Paris, 2001), 102–6.

<sup>30</sup> See D. Krausmüller, *Saints’ Lives and Typika: The Constantinopolitan Monastery of Panagiou in the Eleventh Century* (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, 2001); and D. Krausmüller, ‘The Lost First *Life* of Athanasios the Athonite and its Author Anthony, Abbot of the Constantinopolitan Monastery of Ta Panagiou’, in M. Mullett, ed., *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries* (Belfast, 2007), 63–86.

- [31](#) Cf. D. Krausmüller, ‘On Contents and Structure of the Panagiou *Typikon*: A Contribution to the Early History of “Extended” Monastic Rules’, *BZ* 106 (2013), 39–64.
- [32](#) *Vita B* of Athanasios, ed. J. Noret, *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae* (Turnhout and Leiden 1982), 127–213; *Typikon* of Gregory Pakourianos, ed. P. Gautier, ‘Le typikon du sébaste Grégoire Pakourianos’, *REB* 42 (1984), 5–145.
- [33](#) *Typikon* of Pakourianos, 15, ed. Gautier, 81.1034–41.
- [34](#) *Typikon* of Pakourianos, 15, ed. Gautier, 83.1053–75.
- [35](#) *Typikon* of Pakourianos, 15, ed. Gautier, 83.1045.
- [36](#) Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses*, 26, ed. B. Krivochéine and J. Paramelle, *Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, Catéchèses*, III (SC, 113, Paris, 1965), 86.203–10.
- [37](#) See H. J. M. Turner, *Symeon the New Theologian and Spiritual Fatherhood* (Leiden, 1990). See also J. Turner, ‘The Formation of Monks at St Mamas and at the Theotokos Evergetis’, in Mullett (ed), *Founders and Refounders*, 124–33, esp. 132–3.
- [38](#) On Niketas Stethatos, see D. Krausmüller, ‘Private vs Communal: Niketas Stethatos’s *Hypotyposis* for Stoudios, and Patterns of Worship in Eleventh-Century Byzantine Monasteries’, in M. Mullett and A. Kirby (eds), *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis* (Belfast, 1997), 309–28; and D. Krausmüller, ‘Establishing Authority in the Constantinopolitan Religious Discourse of the Eleventh Century: Inspiration and Learning in the Writings of the Monk Niketas Stethatos’, in S. Steckel, N. Gaul and M. Grünbart (eds), *Networks of Learning: Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West, c.1000–1200* (Berlin and Münster, 2014), 107–24.
- [39](#) See esp. Niketas Stethatos, *Practical, Physical, Gnostic Chapters*, PG120, col. 851–1010. A study of Nicetas’ oeuvre is still a desideratum.
- [40](#) John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, *Johannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (Berlin, 1973), 434.
- [41](#) See R.H. Jordan and R. Morris, *The Hypotyposis of the Monastery of Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople (11th–12th Centuries)* (Farnham and Burlington, 2012).
- [42](#) Evergetis *Typikon*, 9, ed. and tr. P. Gautier, ‘Le typikon de la Théotokos Évergétis’, *REB* 40 (1982), 5–101, esp. 39.420–3.

[43](#) Paul of Evergetis, *Synagoge*, II, ed. Makarios of Corinth and Nikodemos Hagioreites, *Eὐεργετινὸς ἥτοι Συναγωγὴ τῶν θεοφθόγγων ρήμάτων καὶ διδασκαλιῶν τῶν θεοφόρων καὶ ἀγίων πατέρων* (6th edn, Athens 1988), vol. II, 197–286.

[44](#) For a detailed discussion see Krausmüller, ‘Abbots of Evergetis’, 131–3.

[45](#) See Jordan and Morris, *Hypotyposis of Evergetis*, 139–40. See n. 13.

[46](#) See Krausmüller, ‘Lost First Life’, 63–7.

[47](#) *Life of John of Petra*, ed. H. Gelzer, ‘Kallistos’ Enkomion auf Johannes Nesteutes’, *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 29 (1886), 59–89.

[48](#) See Krausmüller, *Saints’ Lives and Typika*; cf. A. Kazhdan, ‘Hagiographical Notes, 1: Two Versions of the Vita Athanasii’, *Byz* 53 (1983), 538–44.

[49](#) See *Life of John of Petra*, ed. Gelzer, 79.17–80.10; and Krausmüller, ‘Panagios Typikon’.

[50](#) *Life of Symeon the New Theologian*, 25–8, ed. I. Hausherr, *Un grand mystique byzantin: Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien (949–1022) par Nicétas Stéthatos* (Rome, 1928), 34–40.

[51](#) *Life of John of Petra*, ed. Gelzer, 66.26–30.

[52](#) *Life of John of Petra*, ed. Gelzer, 69.30–70.6.

[53](#) *Vita B of Athanasios*, 6, ed. Noret, 131.9–19.

[54](#) *Vita B of Athanasios*, 9, ed. Noret, 135.15–18.

[55](#) There is only one earlier example, see *Life of Luke of Hellas*, 7, ed. Sophianos, 162. However, Luke was never a proper member of a coenobitic monastery.

[56](#) *Vita B of Athanasios*, 43, ed. Noret, 177.24–34.

[57](#) *Vita B of Athanasios*, 43, ed. Noret, 177.35–41.

[58](#) *Vita B of Athanasios*, 43, ed. Noret, 177.41–7.

[59](#) See e.g. *Life of Paul of Latros*, 46, ed. Delehaye, 132.

[60](#) See *Life of Euthymius*, 26, ed. Petit, 191; and *Life of Theodora of Thessaloniki*, 59, ed. S.A. Paschalides, ‘Ο βίος τῆς ὀσιομυροβλύτιδος Θεοδώρας τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη ὑπὸ Γρηγορίου τοῦ κληρικοῦ’ (Thessaloniki, 1991), 66–189, esp. 182–4.

[61](#) Significantly, the appearance of such figures is a new phenomenon in Byzantine hagiography. In older lives, members of the community only appear as recipients of miracles. The only exception is

the *Life* of Blaise, 18, ed. Delehaye, 665, however without reference to fasting.

[62](#) *Life* of Symeon, 12, ed. Hausherr, 20.

[63](#) *Life* of Symeon, 48, ed. Hausherr, 62–4.

[64](#) *Life* of Symeon, 48, ed. Hausherr, 64.

[65](#) Arsenios outdid the other monks in fasting, see *Life* of Symeon, 47, ed. Hausherr, 62.

[66](#) *Life* of Meletios, ed. V. Vasilievskih, ‘Nikola episkopa Mefonskogo i Feodora Prodroma pisatelej XII stoletija Meletija Novogo’, *Pravoslavnij Palestinskij Sbornik* 6 (1886), 1–69, esp. 1–39.

[67](#) *Life* of Meletios, ed. Vasilievskij, 7.

[68](#) *Life* of Cyril, ed. É. Sargologos, *La vie de saint Cyrille le Philéote, moine Byzantin († 1110)*, Subsidia Hagiographica 39 (Brussels, 1964), 43–264.

[69](#) *Life* of Cyril, 22.4, ed. Sargologos, 108.

[70](#) *Life* of Cyril, 29.1–2, ed. Sargologos, 127–8.

[71](#) *Life* of Cyril, 29.3, ed. Sargologos, 129.

[72](#) See e.g. the long speech to the community in his brother’s monastery in *Life* of Cyril, 24, ed. Sargologos, 112–17.

[73](#) *Life* of Cyril, 29.2–3, ed. Sargologos, 127, 129.

[74](#) See P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 391.

[75](#) *Life* of Cyril, 29.5, ed. Sargologos, 130–2.

## 14

# Eleventh-Century Monasticism between Politics and Spirituality

*Barbara Crostini*

The importance of monasticism throughout the Christian *oikoumene* of the Middle Ages is widely acknowledged.<sup>1</sup> Its importance is especially manifest in the east, as the direct inheritor of the foundations that defined and embodied the monastic spirit from its origins in Egypt and Palestine. This unbroken thread was maintained as a living tradition through the transmission of texts such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the Letters of Barsanouphios and John, and the accounts of the lives of the desert fathers, including the *Vita Antonii* and other hagiographical narratives. We find such literature, for example, among the sources of the eleventh-century compilation by Paul of Evergetis (d. 1054), the *Synagoge*.<sup>2</sup>

There is a sense, therefore, in which eleventh-century Byzantine monks were ‘speaking the same language’ as their predecessors, articulating through their words and thoughts the same Christian faith as they had expressed in different historical circumstances and places. This perceived commonality puts the emphasis on spiritual or atemporal aspects that make monasticism one continuous voice in Christian history since the beginning of the monastic movement. Though this continuity is important, and can be self-consciously harnessed to shape, describe and sustain monastic identity, it tends to obliterate distinctions and diachronic transformations that

affected monastic like all other human institutions. Both the contingent presence of monks and the particular choices through which they incarnate that presence at a given spatial and temporal juncture – expressed in physical details like the choice of habit and wider spiritual trends – shape and reflect the history that surrounds them.

Cracking open the apertures through which to perceive changes and particularities below the cloak of similarity depends on the availability of sources (textual and otherwise) as well as on the availability of interpretative keys that take the modern observer beyond the surface. Archaeological evidence, including extant monuments, provides arguably the most immediate means of picturing the monastic experience, but there are regrettably few physical remains that allow us to reconstruct the materiality of the Byzantine medieval monastery as it was in the eleventh century.<sup>3</sup> A rich textual archive and specific studies on individual institutions are now easily available in the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Monastic Foundations Project, an essential reference point for anyone with an interest in medieval Byzantine monasteries and their rules.<sup>4</sup> A surprising number of coenobitic foundations claim their origin in the eleventh century, when a vogue for setting down foundation charters or *typika* appeared, coinciding with a time when the Comnenian dynasty supported many new houses. While the study of monastic rules is clearly important as a source of information on the intended internal workings of these monastic houses and as an expression – both explicit and implicit – of various kinds of spirituality,<sup>5</sup> the basic methodological problem with looking at this type of documents as evidence for actual practice is that we can never be sure that what was stated in the rules was also implemented in reality. This problem becomes all the more urgent when these *typika* assume a quasi-symbolic status, being copied faithfully as witnesses to the venerable origins of their monasteries.

In this chapter, bypassing to a great extent these documents, I suggest teasing out a conception of the monastic life in eleventh-century Byzantium through the pages of contemporary illuminated manuscripts. These manuscripts offer us a concrete picture of monks, whose world otherwise

remains immaterial, and difficult to imagine. This path of enquiry is nevertheless limited in the following ways. Only male institutions come to the fore, as the extant sources leave little room for envisaging their female counterparts during this period.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, my evidence is selected with a focus on the state of affairs in Constantinople and its surrounding area, a stance which, for all its importance, is clearly too restricted. Here sources would support a widening of perspectives. One region where looking at eleventh-century sources on monastic life would be especially fruitful is southern Italy, and it is clear that part of this enlarged story would be relevant to the argument of this chapter. Other key areas remain Greece, and especially Athos, and Palestine, despite the Arabic invasions having transformed the lives of Christians in those regions for some time already by the eleventh century. Reasons of space and time necessitate leaving these areas aside for the moment.

My main contention is that monasteries and their inmates constituted an essential part of Constantinopolitan public opinion, even as expressed in that ‘mob’ action which has been said to be typical of this century.<sup>7</sup> Monks and their institutions intentionally positioned themselves so as to be seriously reckoned with in the political arena. I shall present supporting evidence in three parts, each founded in a visual anchor-hold. The depiction of monasticism in an eleventh-century illuminated copy of the extraordinarily popular story of *Barlaam and Joasaph* will raise the question of how the monastic movement was understood in this century. Although this text is not a historical source, or precisely because it is not, I argue that it plays a key role in delineating the eleventh-century *Weltanschauung* for this category. The next two parts seek to delineate the role of monks at the Byzantine court and reflect on the reciprocity of this relation as significant for the perception of the role of monastics in society at large. A miniature showing a monk preaching to royalty articulates in a general way what the famous portrait of Psellos in monk’s dress depicts in a particular instance. This part will discuss some implications of the teaching role for monks. In the third and last part of this chapter, a more general question about the relationship between monks and images in the eleventh century will be

raised. Did part of the ‘crisis’ of the eleventh century hang on a renewed question concerning images? In other words, was there a *third* iconoclasm in Byzantium, and, if so, how was it played out?

## Monks in *Barlaam and Joasaph*

It may not be entirely a coincidence that, among the early manuscripts of *Barlaam and Joasaph*,<sup>8</sup> a splendid illuminated copy is still found at the library of the Iviron monastery on Athos, the same place where this story was probably translated from Georgian into Greek by Euthymios the Iberian (d. 1028).<sup>9</sup> The manuscript, now shelfmarked as Iviron 463, has only recently been considered to date from the eleventh century.<sup>10</sup> In it, an early French translation of the text is also found, written in the margins and now partly cut off due to later trimming during rebinding. This co-existence of Greek and French on the same parchment points to the adaptability of this text across east and west, a fact confirmed by the early date of the Latin translation (c.1050) and the manuscript evidence that points to links between Constantinople and Apulia in its early transmission history.<sup>11</sup> The immediate success of *Barlaam and Joasaph* is uncontested, and its popularity as witnessed by the manuscript tradition peaks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Though its readership was widespread and varied, as Pérez Martín has proved through a survey of the available colophons and marks of ownership, the monastic public was at the core of both production and demand.

*Barlaam and Joasaph* is structured around a series of didactic stories or ‘apologues’ (akin to parables and fables), set in a narrative frame, which itself has an educational role to play for the reader/listener. In it, monks are depicted as a powerful and disruptive social force that undermines the seeming happiness of a prosperous secular state. Relentlessly preaching their message and successfully converting people, monks suffer persecution because of their steadfast beliefs and staunch adherence to the truth of the

Gospel. Wandering monks, monks in caves, persecuted monks, as memorably depicted in Iviron's miniatures,<sup>12</sup> form a significant but often overlooked background to the fascinating story of the conversion to Christianity of the young sovereign Joasaph through the ascetic Barlaam, who secretly preached to him these instructive tales with a catechetical intent. While, in the sheltered education of the young prince, death was hidden and an illusion of happiness conveyed through an artificially pain-free experience, the unavoidable realities of old age, disease and death act as an eye-opener in the process of conversion, where the Christian perspective provides a rationale for their acceptance and an account by which such difficulties can be acknowledged and incorporated into one's existence, rather than ignored. Central to this story is the display of Christian *paideia*, upholding the power of persuasion of wise words and the example of a holy teacher, Barlaam. It is significant that the addition of an external tutor was the principal change that the Christian version of the story brought to the self-illumination enacted by its Buddhist antecedent.<sup>13</sup> The outcome of the preacher's effort is not just the conversion of one person, but rather the Christianization of an entire kingdom through its leader. At the same time, the prince's conversion to Christianity guarantees the legitimization of the extreme forms of life chosen in that kingdom by monks and ascetics who need no longer fear persecution.

This story thus presents monasticism at the very heart of Christian life, and its adepts as radicals who courageously branch out to reach the powerful with their message, penetrate their hearts with the spirit of the Gospel, or stand up against them as martyrs when required. From the monastic perspective, this story is disquieting as well as exhilarating. It reminds monks that peace-time in a Christianized state in which their manner of living is acceptable and respected is not a situation to be taken for granted. This story may have been particularly relevant to eastern Christianity in a period in which pressure on Christian communities in the Middle East, due to religious intolerance, was growing.<sup>14</sup> But it may have had resonances closer to home as well. Although the Byzantine emperor himself ostensibly moved in a thoroughly Christianized orbit, this edifying

tale acts as a reminder of what exactly he stands for with respect to the demands expressed by the Christian faith. The process of Christianization is an ongoing one, passing through phases of intense learning and the experience of life itself, and this continual conversion is demanded of the emperor as a premiss for the justice of his government and for the peace in which Christian people can live and act.

The fact that the Iviron manuscript of *Barlaam and Joasaph*, in contrast to its tale of poverty and renunciation, was so lavishly illustrated points to a wealthy patron behind this production. Although no imperial portrait is found in it, an imperial audience and recipient of this courtly tale can be surmised. A precise connection between this narrative and its use as a ‘mirror of princes’ can be indirectly traced through the illustration of one of Barlaam’s fables, the ‘story of the two mice’,<sup>15</sup> which is also found in the so-called marginal Psalters produced at Constantinople in the second half of the eleventh century. This fable is an effective and terrifying reminder of death, represented by the pursuing unicorn, and of the destructive action of the passing of time, symbolized by the mice gnawing at the roots of a flourishing tree. A representation of this fable in graphic form occurs in the closely related ‘Theodore’ and ‘Barberini’ Psalters.<sup>16</sup> As the Barberini Psalter contains an imperial portrait, it doubtless owes its origin to the sponsorship of the Byzantine court.<sup>17</sup> And as its illustrative programme is closely related to that of the Theodore Psalter, the monastery of Stoudios is likely to have been the place where these theologically elaborate illustrations were developed and possibly also realized. In these illuminated manuscripts, and especially in their pictorial expression of ideas on how to apply Christian principles not only to individual lives, but to the running of empires, we see how monastic spirituality and courtly life came together. On these grounds, one may not dismiss the tale *Barlaam and Joasaph* as an irrelevant piece of spiritual propaganda, more or less highly regarded because of its (spurious) attribution to St John Damascene. Rather, this tale, strangely folkloric in some respects, tediously didactic in others, is nevertheless a key piece for the understanding of the eleventh-century monastic *Weltanschauung*.

## Teaching the emperor and taming the monk

While the didactic valence of illuminated manuscripts is open to interpretation, and the identification of their intended audience often rests, alas, on thin ground due to lack of explicit attributions, the full-page miniature contained in the frontispiece to MS Coislin 79 speaks loudly and clearly of an established role for monks as teachers to the emperor.<sup>18</sup> The details in this image are significant. At the opening of this book of homilies of John Chrysostom, the monk Sabas, named in the caption,<sup>19</sup> is standing authoritatively before the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates (r. 1078–81), preaching to him from a book placed on a wooden lectern with the aid of a teaching rod. This attribute, the rod, perhaps used as a reading aid to keep the place in the book while reading aloud, is also a symbol for the teacher, so that the act of reading is through it imbued with a specific significance. The monk – a specific monk called Sabas? or *the* monk St Sabas? – becomes the voice of that Church Father whose text he reads from the book, and his monastic status, underlined by his garments – a black cloak over a brown tunic – and by his tonsure, clearly confers enough authority for him to become instructor to royalty.<sup>20</sup> In fact, though the emperor is enthroned, the two figures are of comparable size and the plane on which they stand, depicted in the form of a blue ornamented band, perhaps representing a carpet, sets them on an equal footing. One may contrast the difference in size between the emperor and his ministers, who stand behind him in a secondary visual plane, in the miniature at fo. 2<sup>v</sup>, and even more the diminutive person kneeling by the emperor's footstool on fo. 2<sup>r</sup>, where instead the emperor is equal to the Archangel Michael and John Chrysostom himself, who hands him his book of homilies.

This miniature is eloquent of how books were used in practice and how the audience interacted with texts via their monastic teacher. The action of reading out loud and of the listening monarch echoes the story of *Barlaam and Joasaph*, while the depiction of the personifications of Truth and Justice behind the emperor in the image where he is presented with his courtiers

clearly speaks of the contents and the consequences of such interaction. Thus preaching and good counsel, embodied in the book, but voiced through the monk's preaching via the words in this book, have direct impact on good government by making the ruler one of the faithful, as the caption around Botaneiates' portrait specifies.

Keeping this iconography in mind, it is possible to re-evaluate the famous miniature depicting Psellos with his pupil Michael VII Doukas (1071–8) in MS Athos Pantokrator 234 (12th–13th century?), fo. 245a.<sup>21</sup> Here the monastic identity of Psellos as teacher, evident in his long black plain robe and cap, need not be considered a purely conventional choice. It displays clearly that it was in fact because of his monastic profession that Psellos won for himself the role of *didaskalos* and spokesman to emperors. Moreover, the illustrations in the Pantokrator manuscript, though considered later than Psellos' own lifetime, place his image as an author portrait in parallel with the portraits of New Testament authors, such as Peter and Paul, and the Church Fathers Gregory the Theologian, John Damascene and Athanasios of Alexandria.<sup>22</sup> Two figures also have an audience, mirroring Psellos' royal addressee: these are Luke, who sits tonsured and haloed addressing a crowd of disciples, and Paul, writing a letter to Thecla, his disciple celebrated in the Apocryphal Acts, although the text here is the Letter to the Romans.<sup>23</sup> It is as a monk that Psellos is consistently characterized in the manuscript headings of his works. That role therefore functioned as a guarantee of Orthodoxy and as an authorization carrying with it a certain privileged status in the Byzantine government.

When considered in the light of this evidence, one is hard put to conclude that Constantinopolitan monks were obscurantists. Their project of shaping the city's – and thus also the empire's – destiny was assiduously cultivated starting in the Byzantine capital and extending, through a network of establishments and communications, to international politics. In the *Chronographia*, Psellos fiercely attacks the hypocrisy of upholding ascetic ideals while enjoying extraordinary benefits from wealthy patrons, a critique which echoes the problem of *charistikarioi* in the latter half of the eleventh century. But while Psellos' lampooning of monastics for their moral

corruption is not particularly original, his grasp of the purpose of monasticism was surely not as pedestrian as Kaldellis maintains.<sup>24</sup> Psellos was a sophisticated aesthete who could not have taken issue with artistic achievements that saw the cooperation between wealthy patrons and monastic institutions, producing monuments such as, for example, the mosaics of Nea Mone on Chios.<sup>25</sup> The programme of monasticism was not so inward-turned; while moral reform – and we will come back to this – may have been high on the agenda, interaction with the surrounding powers, and particularly establishing and maintaining a respectable intellectual presence in the transforming environment of the capital was among the most important roles that monasteries in the Byzantine Church and empire aspired to hold.

It is indeed very difficult to construct a homogeneous, not to say coherent, account of Psellos' thought, whether in philosophy, religion or politics. For this reason, contemporary Psellian scholarship has turned to examining details rather than insisting on the overall picture and coming up against its inevitable contradictions. If Kaldellis does have the merit of having proposed one interpretation based on interesting philological clues, nonetheless his conclusions risk flattening Psellos' multiformity in a reductive manner. It may appear convenient to repudiate the Christian character of Psellos' formation and output by considering it a mere show for keeping ecclesiastical authorities at a safe distance, but this thorough de-Christianization of the Byzantine empire and its major exponents such as Psellos (or indeed Basil II) is hardly convincing if we weigh the evidence fairly.

Unlike the eastern pair of royal figures in the *Barlaam and Joasaph* narrative, emperors in Byzantium were unquestionably placed within the same set of Christian beliefs as the monks. Thus taming, reconciling or at least harnessing this potentially subversive force was high on their agenda. The sponsorship of costly books and the lavish donations to monastic establishments are sure signs of this conciliatory action. As we have seen, imperial portraits that decorate important illustrated manuscripts act as manifestos of this vital exchange between the ecclesiastical world and

secular authority. Constantine Monomachos' portrait in the full-page dedicatory miniature in MS Sinai gr. 364 places him at the centre of the imperial pair of women, Zoe and Theodora, forming a kind of secular trinity of power.<sup>26</sup> Scholars have suggested that this book was made as a gift on the occasion of the inauguration of his foundation, the monastery of St George of Mangana, in May 1047. The manuscript, just like Coislin 79, contains homilies of John Chrysostom. The exegetical character of this text, on Matthew's Gospel, bears witness to the level of education available in this monastic foundation. Moreover, Constantine also sponsored the copying of other, more basic books which were indispensable for the liturgy and bible reading in the monastery. It is hard not to think that such imperial foundations had the role of supporting the ruling emperor not only by prayer, but also by showing unfailing loyalty, thus building a power-base for the emperor across society, especially when – as in the case of Constantine – ethical failures could have compromised his standing.<sup>27</sup>

Imperial power in Byzantium depended to such a large extent on divine sanctioning (or at least on the public recognition of such approval), that neglecting monasticism would have been tantamount to forfeiting a large proportion of support at home, both directly through the numerous members forming monastic communities, and indirectly, by targeting laymen more generally involved in the networks around such communities. Lavish sponsorship of monastic foundations was thus part of imperial propaganda for most Byzantine rulers – and whether or not this reflected their personal beliefs, if ever this could be ascertained, is of course beside the point.

One can therefore describe the Christian discourse contained in these books, expressed both in words and in images, not just as a univocal 'message' spoken from the monks to the emperor with a preaching intent, but more like a two-way communication. The courtly environment at once reflects on the Christian message while in turn acknowledging the issues that formed the concerns of the monastic orbit, demonstrating awareness of its demands and support of its intellectual and ethical programme.

## Crisis in the eleventh century: a third iconoclasm?

The notion of ‘crisis’ in the eleventh century has been recurrent in historiography, whether it rests on the notion of political instability, economic decline or ecclesiastical upheaval, with a focus on a date, 1054. All these aspects, taken together, convey the impression of a troubled century, and it would be convenient to contrast this turmoil with the peace, quiet and stability of the monastic institution. However, any look at monasticism reveals that rifts and controversy were rife below the calm surface of such environments.

A specific question may be formulated by looking at some miniatures from the eleventh-century Theodore Psalter, produced at the monastery of St John Stoudios in 1066, and comparing it with the ninth-century Chludov Psalter,<sup>28</sup> which mainly acts as a statement of anti-iconoclastic beliefs and policies. In the famous depiction of the Second Council of Nicaea, politics enters the margins of a sacred book as the most appropriate and significant place for polemics and criticism. Der Nersessian suggests that the re-use of this image in the Theodore Psalter stemmed from a strong ‘souvenir’ of the iconoclast controversy which it relayed to an eleventh-century audience.<sup>29</sup> But what was the purpose of reviving this memory? Was there perhaps a new – a third – iconoclasm in the eleventh century?

Several answers are possible here, according to the interpretation of ‘iconoclasm’. Understood at a more symbolic level as a power struggle between secular and ecclesiastical authorities, it once seemed to me<sup>30</sup> that the ‘souvenir’ was most fitting from a Stoudite perspective, since the monks from Stoudios, led by St Theodore, were champions in the restoration of image worship understood as the symbol of the Church’s freedom of action within the empire. This abstract and symbolic understanding of iconoclasm, which had also been part of the initial controversy, need not have anything specific to do with the question of the theological status of images.

However, there is also the possibility that ‘iconoclasm’, intended *stricto sensu* as the question of the proper status of images and their worship, was

still a bone of contention two centuries after the victory of Orthodoxy. Though this perspective does not of course annul the political overtones of such a controversy, it needs to be based on evidence that images *per se* were at the centre of discussion. Charles Barber's monograph, *Contesting the Logic of Painting*, suggests that there was room for such controversy even as late as the eleventh century.<sup>31</sup> Through a subtle and sensitive analysis of many key texts, Barber succeeds in demonstrating differences between Symeon the New Theologian and Psellos in their attitudes to icons. Essentially, Barber identifies in Symeon's spirituality an iconoclastic tendency, given that the type of mysticism he advocated relied on a supra-sensory vision, which the limited icon could not, in fact, support or even inspire. One could argue that the attention bestowed on the icon of Symeon Eulabes in Symeon the New Theologian's trial functioned precisely as a statement of his Orthodoxy on this point.<sup>32</sup> This interpretation would cohere with the overall purpose of the *Life* as bringing Symeon in line with mainstream Stoudite tradition.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary, Psellos, in sermons such as the one on the Crucifixion,<sup>34</sup> expresses his trust in the capacity of icons to guide the believer to an encounter between the material and spiritual worlds, and this in at least two senses: first, by recognizing in the act of creation a concurrence of human skill and divine inspiration, not unlike the inspired writings of the evangelists; second, by admitting a channel for the dispensation of grace in the interaction between believer and sacred object, in which neither the believer's qualifications – as an intellectual or as a simple person, as a 'pure' or a 'sinful' person – nor the object's specific characteristics – be it a panel icon, a relic, or a repoussé image – were of decisive importance. As a Neoplatonic thinker, Psellos was committed to the idea of theurgy as complementing pure philosophical contemplation, and in Christian terms theurgy essentially consisted of liturgical actions and the veneration of sacred objects such as relics and icons.<sup>35</sup>

Pentcheva's book, *The Sensual Icon*, emphasizes how repoussé and metalwork icons were especially suited to perform this dynamic role in the liturgy as the appearance they displayed changed with the lighting in the church. She argues that it is this type of icon we should think of as common

in the eleventh century, as opposed to the flat painted panels of later Orthodoxy, and that this fashion came to an end through an economic crisis which precipitated ‘Komnenian iconoclasm’, that is, the melting down of the metal-based objects of worship.<sup>36</sup> Based on the survival of fragments, Pentcheva emphasizes ‘poikilia’ as that changing quality that often gave rise to oracular interpretations expressed through the images, as in the famous case of the icon of Christ Antiphonetes in the hands of the empress Zoe.<sup>37</sup>

Psellos’ sermon on the Crucifixion, appropriately connected by Elizabeth Fisher<sup>38</sup> to the deposition miniature in the Morgan Lectionary,<sup>39</sup> stands as a reminder of another important trend of monastic worship, which uses images for meditation in what has been termed ‘affective piety’. Although the stirring of emotion before the mysteries of Christian worship cannot itself have been new, the use of this personal relation to Christ’s suffering as a means of growth into the Christian and the monastic life begins in this century and develops more and more strongly in the following centuries of the Middle Ages, in both east and west. The moving iconography of the Crucifixion and the steady increase in the depiction of the Deposition scenes are visual traces of this development.

It is probably against this kind of background that even the debates between the Greek and Latin Churches leading to the 1054 excommunications have been read in an ‘iconoclast’ light. In a recent article, Michele Bacci set himself the task of focusing on the evidence concerning the more specific question of icons in relation to 1054.<sup>40</sup> While the polemic on images could be taken as one in a long list of ‘base’ arguments in the polemic, its specific mention with reference to the Crucifixion in Humbert of Silvacandida’s *Dialogue* has given rise to a specific interpretative crux. This text needs a proper critical edition before one can use it. Bacci based his argument on Will’s 1891 edition, where one reads ‘Nunquid etiam inde est, quod hominis morituri imaginem affligitis crucifixae imagini Christi, ita ut quidam Antichristus in cruce Christi sedeat ostendens se adorandum tanquam sit Deus?’

Although three modern authorities have interpreted this phrase as referring to a specific iconography of the Crucifixion, some with

repercussions of potentially considerable magnitude for the history of art,<sup>41</sup> I doubt that Humbert's reference here has anything to do with iconography at all. Rather, what he appears to criticize must fit in the context of the series of Byzantine practices regarding the administration of sacraments in special situations which he is taking up in turn in this passage. In particular, two clauses concern the dying. Humbert accuses the Greeks of being more cruel than Herod in denying the newborn baptism before the eighth day, and thus consigning masses of 'parvulis morituri', that is, babies who would die, to 'eternal fire'. This misguided policy towards infant baptism is set in parallel with a practice concerning dying adults, although it is not so clear what specific practice is being referred to. Perhaps this practice included stretching a dying person into the position of the crucified, something that Humbert considers blasphemous, as if placing an Antichrist on the cross. I am not sure where evidence can be found for clarifying this; certainly not in illuminated manuscripts, where the biers of the dying saints are always comfortable beds, or at most sarcophagi in which arms are well composed. It seems clear from the context, however, that Humbert's text is a wild goose chase concerning the iconoclasm debate. But in the rather absurd accusations of iconoclasm that Kerouarios levels against the Latins (easy to refute for Peter of Antioch who had observed the Latins' devotion to icons) one can perhaps read another sign of the eleventh-century disquiet about image worship, once again, and even more significantly, tied to the question of the definition of the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

Entering the monastic world through the texts and images that belonged to this world in eleventh-century Byzantium exposes, I think, two main points. The first is that the monastic project did not exhaust itself introspectively, but always performed a collective social function, whether practical – in works of charity such as hospitality, cure of the sick, the succour of the

needy – or political, in shaping the opinion of the faithful and in acting as a force campaigning for a Christian world at the very centre of power in the capital, that is, the imperial court. This action was not without tensions even when the groundwork for a Christian state was pretty well established, and we perceive this unrest in the latent threat of ungodly rulers or iconoclastic trends.

Given this ideal for monasticism as a social force, it is significant that the second point that forcefully emerges from the eleventh-century evidence is that teaching – reading, preaching, discussing, finding reconciliation in the writing of new works – forms the essence of this dynamic Christian approach, and, very unlike the fixity that is often imputed to Byzantium, shows these forces as still quivering with creative impulses in the eleventh-century environment. At the same time, monasteries represented a continuity that became all the more important for a state fragmented by a succession of rulers, and the re-affirmation of each of these in donations of property and books to existing or to new monastic foundations served at the same time to ingratiate them and to create a chain linking them in significant ways to their predecessors.

On the basis of the extant evidence of libraries and manuscripts, however reduced in size and number, monks cannot be described as obscurantists, in that they did not deliberately restrict knowledge, though it is natural that their preferred topics such as books of theological content received the greatest attention. Nevertheless, one could *perhaps* view them as ‘holy terrorists’, similarly to Kaldellis’ take on Psellos’ views of monks,<sup>43</sup> in the sense that they formed a potentially disruptive force, and it was in the emperor’s best interests to harness this force and keep the monks’ intentions above board. Like the holy man of late antiquity, these holy – and surely also less holy – men embodied a separate and fearful power, a ‘dritte Macht’, as Hutter once put it,<sup>44</sup> steering a narrow course between Church and State.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> G. Penco, *Il monachesimo fra spiritualità e cultura* (Milan, 1991), offers a comprehensive introduction to late antique and medieval monasticism. The classic study of J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York, 1991), though restricted to the west, nevertheless presents a splendid introduction to the topic I would like to address in this chapter.
- <sup>2</sup> The Evergetis Project led by Margaret Mullett at Queen's University Belfast has produced a new corpus of literature on this monastery thanks to an ongoing grant from the British Academy and has resulted in three volumes, published in 1994, 1997 and 2007 respectively. The most recent translation of the *Synagoge* is that into Italian, made by M.B. Artioli, *Paolo Everghetinós: Esempi e parole dei santi padri teofori*, 4 vols (Praglia, 2012–15).
- <sup>3</sup> Of course, many slightly later monastic buildings do exist, but it is always dangerous to infer backwards.
- <sup>4</sup> [www.doaks.org/resources/publications/doaks-online-publications/byzantine-studies/typikapdf](http://www.doaks.org/resources/publications/doaks-online-publications/byzantine-studies/typikapdf) (accessed 17 November 2016).
- <sup>5</sup> For which see Chapter 13 by Dirk Krausmüller in the present volume.
- <sup>6</sup> Alice-Mary Talbot's work on female monasticism in Byzantium benefits from more extensive sources for the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.
- <sup>7</sup> See the considerations in C. Holmes, 'Constantinople in the Reign of Basil II', in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilisation: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge, 2006), 326–39.
- <sup>8</sup> I have consulted with profit the Italian edition, translation and commentary by S. Ronchey and P. Cesaretti, *Vita bizantina di Barlaam e Ioasaf* (Milan, 1980). But see also the new edition by R. Volk, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos VI/1: Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph (spuria)*, Patristische Texte und Studien 61, and VI/2: *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph (spuria). Text und zehn Appendices*, Patristische Texte und Studien 60 (Berlin, 2006), in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. B. Kotter, Byzantinischen Institut der Abtei Scheyern (Berlin and New York, 1969–[2009]), vols 6/1–2 (2006 and 2009) See the positive review by P. van der Horst in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* at <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2009/2009-06-04.html> (accessed 24 September 2012).

- [9](#) D.M. Lang, ‘St. Euthymius the Georgian and the Barlaam and Ioasaph Romance’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 17/2 (1955), 306–25; D.M. Lang, *The Balavhariani (Barlaam and Josaphat): A Tale from the Christian East Translated from the Old Georgian* (London, 1966). See also P. Devos, ‘Les origines du Barlaam et Joasaph grec’, *AnBoll* 65 (1957), 84–104; E. Khintibidze, ‘New Materials on the Origin of “Barlaam and Joasaph”’, *OCP* 63 (1997), 491–501.
- [10](#) It was retrodated on palaeographical grounds by I. Pérez Martin, ‘Apuntes sobre la historia del texto bizantino de la Historia edificante de Barlaam y Josafat’, *Erytheia* 17 (1996), 159–77, at 176, and F. D’Aiuto, ‘Su alcuni copisti di codici miniati mediobizantini’, in *Byz* 67 (1997), 5–59.
- [11](#) See P. Peeters, ‘La première traduction latine de “Barlaam et Joasaph” et son original grec’, *AnBoll* 49 (1931), 276–312; but according to Pérez Martin, ‘Apuntes’, 164, the eleventh-century date of the MS in question (Venice, Marcianus gr. App. VII, 26) is disputed.
- [12](#) Reproductions in S. Der Nersessian, *L’illustration du roman de Barlaam et Joasaph d’après les clichés de la Frick Art Reference Library et de la Mission Gallery Millet au Mont-Athos* (Paris, 1937), and in colour in S.M. Pelekanides et al., *The Treasures of Mount Athos: Illuminated Manuscripts, Miniatures–Headpieces–Initial Letters*. Vol. 2, *The Monasteries of Iviron, St. Panteleimon, Esphigmenou, and Chilandari* (Athens, 1975), figs 53–130, esp. figs 56–9, fos. 4v–7r, fig. 61, fo. 11v, fig. 69, fo. 21r, figs 90–1, fos. 66v–68r.
- [13](#) G. Scarcia, *Storia di Joasaph senza Barlaam* (Soveria Mannelli, 1998). I discuss this briefly in ‘Catechetical Teaching in Byzantium in Eleventh-Century Constantinople: The Cases of Paul Evergetis and *Vaticanus graecus 752*’, in S. Stickel, N. Gaul and M. Grünbart (eds), *Networks of Learning: Scholars in Byzantium and the West, 1000–1200. Proceedings from the ‘Charismatic Authority, Spiritual Friendship’ Workshop* (Vienna and Berlin, 2014), 89–106, at 105.
- [14](#) See Chapter 9 by Jonathan Shepard in the present volume.
- [15](#) Ch. 12. The English translation by Woodward and Mattingly (1936) is now available on e-books.
- [16](#) S. Der Nersessian, *L’Illustration des Psautiers grecs du Moyen Âge*, II: *Londres, Add. 19.352*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers archéologiques 5 (Paris, 1970), 69 and figs 286 and 332.
- [17](#) The identification of this portrait has been unclear, though, and this has led to different datings proposed for the codex. See in the first instance I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976); further study of this codex in a difficult to access

publication by P. Canart, J. Anderson and C. Walter, *The Barberini Psalter: Codex Vaticanus Barberinianus graecus 372* (Zurich and New York, 1989).

18 H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, AD 843–1261*. Exhibition catalogue. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, 207–8: no. 143, with colour reproductions. The whole MS is now available online at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8470047d/f11.image> (accessed 23 September 2012).

19 The caption is partly erased. The extant part reads: ὁ ἐν μοναχοῖς εὑ ... / Σαβας καὶ πι ...

20 Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, interprets this image as a donor portrait by labelling it ‘Monk Sabbas offering his codex to the Emperor’, fig. 69. However, the ‘presentation’ miniature is that on fo. 2<sup>v</sup>, Spatharakis fig. 72, where John Chrysostom is giving the book to the emperor. No one has I think argued for the identification of the diminutive figure on fo. 2<sup>v</sup> (usually thought of as the patron, or scribe, or both) with the monk Sabas on fo. 1<sup>r</sup>. The Metropolitan Exhibition catalogue uses the more neutral caption, ‘The Monk Sabas reads to the Emperor’, 83 (with facing colour illustration).

21 Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 230–2 and fig. 174; Pelekanides, *Treasures*, vol. 3, fig. 255, 157, descr. 283–7 (as Tetraevangelion, 13–14 c.).

22 Pelekanides, *Treasures*, vol. 3, figs 247–57, 155–7.

23 Pelekanides, *Treasures*, vol. 3, figs 245–6, 155. I am not sure how common the appearance of Thecla is.

24 A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos’ Chronographia* (Leiden, 1999), 80–9. This section is entitled ‘The repudiation of monasticism’.

25 D. Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios* (Athens, 1985). The information concerning Monomachos as founder of this monastery is not entirely proved, but there are chrysobulls that link him to this place as a patron: see E. Vranoussi, ‘Les archives de Nea Moni de Chio: Essai de reconstitution d’un dossier perdu’, *BNJ* 23 (1977–84), 267–84. I owe this reference to Rosemary Morris, with thanks for discussing this matter.

26 Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 99–102, fig. 66; K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek MSS, vol. 1: From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Princeton, 1990), no. 24, 65–8, fig. 185; D. Harlfinger et al., *Specimina Sinaitica: die datierten griechische Handschriften des Katharinen-Klosters auf dem Berge Sinai* (Berlin, 1983), 23–5: no. 9, pl. 41–4.

[27](#) On his liaison with Maria Skleraina, see M.D. Spadaro (ed.), *Michelis Pselli, In Mariam Sclerainam, Testo critico, introduzione e commentario* (Catania, 1984), 37–44.

[28](#) Evans and Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium*, no. 52, 97–8, see also 185.

[29](#) Der Nersessian, *Psautiers*, fig. 48 (fol. 27v), cf. fig. 333.

[30](#) As expressed in my article, ‘Navigando per il Salterio: riflessioni intorno all’edizione elettronica del manoscritto Londra, British Library, Addit. 19.352. Seconda parte. Il significato storico del Salterio di Teodoro’, *BollGrott* 56–7 (2002–3), 133–209.

[31](#) C. Barber, *Contesting the Logic of Painting: Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Leiden, 2007).

[32](#) The episode is complex and gives further witness to how much importance still hangs on the visual components of worship. For a full discussion, see C. Barber, ‘Icon and Portrait in the Trial of Symeon the New Theologian’, in A. Eastmond, L. James and R. Cormack (eds), *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 25–34.

[33](#) H. Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2000), argues that Symeon was Orthodox because he is so presented in the *Life*. However, this effort of representing him as Orthodox by the Stoudite author of the *Life* can be taken as proof that this was something that needed arguing for. See my review of this book in *The Catholic Historical Review* 89 (2003), 290–1. The *Life* was edited by I. Hausherr, *Un grand mystique byzantin: Vie de Syméon le nouveau théologien par Niketas Stethatos*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 12 (Rome, 1928).

[34](#) P. Gautier, ‘Un discours inédit de Michel Psellos sur la Crucifixion’, *REB* 49 (1991), 5–66.

[35](#) B. Crostini, ‘Book and Image in Byzantine Christianity: Polemics or Communication?’, in S. Mariev and W.-M. Stock (eds), *Byzantine Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium*, Byzantinisches Archiv 25 (Berlin, 2013), 99–119.

[36](#) B. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2010), 198–200.

[37](#) Pentcheva’s improvement on Sewter’s translation of the Greek text transforms this representation of Christ from a voodoo doll into a likely object of Christian worship, 184.

[38](#) E. Fisher, ‘Image and Ekphrasis in Michael Psellos’ Sermon on the Crucifixion’, *Byzantinoslavica* 55 (1994), 44–55.

- [39](#) K. Weitzmann, ‘The Constantinopolitan Lectionary, Morgan 639’, in D. Miner (ed.), *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle Da Costa Green* (Princeton, NJ, 1954), 358–73.
- [40](#) M. Bacci, ‘Le rôle des images dans les polémiques religieuses entre l’Église grecque et l’église latine (XIe–XIIIe siècles)’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 81 (2003), 1023–49.
- [41](#) Grondijs, Belting and Grillmeier, all summarized by Bacci, ‘Le rôle des images’, 1025–7.
- [42](#) Bacci, ‘Le rôle des images’, 1029–30. See also T. Kolbaba, ‘Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious Errors: Themes and Changes from 830 to 1350’, in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottadeh (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, DC, 2001), 117–43.
- [43](#) Kaldellis, *The Argument*, 84.
- [44](#) I. Hutter, ‘Theodoros βιβλιογράφος und die Buchmalerei in Studiu’, *BollGrott*, n.s. 51 (1997) [= ‘Οπώρα: Studi in onore di mgr Paul Canart per il LXX compleanno’, S. Lucà and L. Perria eds], 177–208, pl. 1–7.

## 15

# The Rise of Devotional Imagery in Eleventh-Century Byzantium

*Georgi R. Parpulov*

In Comnenian painting, compared to that of the preceding period, facial expressions become more earnest and draperies more agitated. For some, this reflects a strengthening of inter-personal ties in Byzantine society and a corresponding shift ‘from impersonal to personal’ in Byzantine culture.<sup>1</sup> Others point to church ritual as the primary cause of change in religious art.<sup>2</sup> But many of the formal peculiarities that distinguish twelfth-century art are already found c.1050–80<sup>3</sup> in icons meant for private use, *Andachts Bilder* rather than *Kultbilder*. I submit that devotional imagery of this sort formed the breeding ground for innovations which later, under the Comnenian emperors, entered monumental painting. Small-scale religious pictures were subject to repeated, prolonged, intense viewing, hence their makers tended to adopt various devices that would engage and hold a viewer’s attention. The peculiar conditions under which such devices developed can be illustrated with three examples:

- (1) A leaf now in Princeton comes from an eleventh-century Psalter where probably each section in the text opened with a full-page miniature. The sole surviving one shows the Crucifixion and Resurrection.<sup>4</sup> It marked a point (known as *kathisma*, ‘session’),

between Psalms 8 and 9, at which the reader was meant to pause and say a prayer.<sup>5</sup> The picture formed a visual counterpart to this prayer, as well as the tangible focus upon which one concentrated before moving on to the next portion of Psalms.

- (2) A bifolium in a Psalter dated 1058 contains a series of scenes that present a pictorial synopsis of the New Testament.<sup>6</sup> The two leaves were certainly part of the volume from the moment it was copied, yet form an independent unit both physically (as a separate gathering) and conceptually (as a self-contained diptych icon). Although these are not the very first pages in the book, they are far more abraded than any of the adjacent ones, many of which also carry miniatures. Evidently this particular set of images received special attention.
- (3) One finds similar excessive wear in those miniatures of a Psalter and New Testament dated 1083 which show holy figures (Christ, the Virgin and Child, prominent saints) head-on, facing the viewer.<sup>7</sup> These, again, must have been the images with which readers preferred to interact.<sup>8</sup>

The miniatures discussed so far are similar in two respects. First, they are placed at points where one pauses before, or in the course of, reading – consequently, they could be viewed at length. Second, the scenes they show do not directly illustrate the book's text – thus, they could be viewed independently. The relatively better preserved leaf in Princeton may be analysed in some detail: The two overlarge figures of Christ establish a strong central axis round which both scenes are organized symmetrically. The shape of the cross above is echoed below by the crossed wings of the broken doors of hell, trampled upon by the risen Lord. Eve's red tunic is by far the brightest spot on the page and opens an 'entrance' for the beholder (we do not know who the original owner of the book was, but it may have been a woman). The dark blue of Eve's headscarf is repeated across the page in the Virgin's tunic; John's light-blue garment mirrors that of Adam. These correspondences emphasize meaningful connections (death on the cross

equals victory over death; Mary and Eve are opposites), but also, on a purely formal level, organize the image in a way that makes it suitable for longer viewing.

## Three questions

Before going on, I ought to deal with three general questions: (i) Were religious images privately owned? – Yes. Attested instances are sufficiently numerous.<sup>9</sup> Two examples should do: one taken from a narrative, the other from a document. In his biography of Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022) Niketas Stethatos, who knew the saint personally, describes the following miracle:

Now because the large prayer icon had been hung above, close to the ceiling of his cell, and there was a lamp burning in front of the icon, I once saw that, lo!, the saint – Christ the Truth is my witness! – hung in the air at the same level as the icon, at about four cubits' height, his hands raised in prayer, and he was all light and all brightness.<sup>10</sup>

Stethatos' term ‘prayer icon’ (*deesis eikon*) is evidently the equivalent of the *Andachtsbild* (‘devotional image’) of modern art historians.<sup>11</sup> A panel hung in a similar manner inside John Chrysostom’s study is seen in some of that author’s eleventh-century portraits.<sup>12</sup> On a more sober note, the testament of Christodoulos of Patmos (d. 1093) lists pieces of movable property:

I also leave to the above-mentioned monastery [of Patmos] the sacred and holy icons that I own in Euripos: Christ, the Virgin and the Archangel painted on a single wooden panel; another icon [possibly a bilateral one] of the Crucifixion that also has St [John] the Theologian; another, diptych icon that has the dominical feasts.<sup>13</sup>

The last icon must have been comparable to a small eleventh-century diptych preserved at Sinai<sup>14</sup> and to the series of miniatures in the Psalter of 1058.<sup>15</sup> There are also extreme cases. On the one hand, Psellos would steal religious images from churches to admire them at home.<sup>16</sup> On the other, two monastic saints deemed personal icons unnecessary. One was Lazarus of Mt

Galesion (d. 1053) – but his biographer expressly qualified his advice as exceptional;<sup>17</sup> the other was Christodoulos<sup>18</sup> – but he nevertheless owned icons himself. (ii) Were images expected to have a psychological effect upon their viewers? – Yes. While still a layman, St Symeon (Stethatos tells us) hit upon a copy of John Climacus' *Ladder* and was struck by its [chapter 6](#), ‘On Remembrance of Death’. This moved him to spend long hours in prayer and contemplation among some open tombs near his parents’ house. ‘And indeed, the grace of God worked in him to such an extent that the sight of those dead bodies was imprinted on his mind as though it were an image painted on a wall.’<sup>19</sup> And here is Michael of Ephesus commenting, probably in the early twelfth century, upon one of Aristotle’s *Parva naturalia*, ‘On Memory’:

Thus, when the thing perceived – say, a man, lion or something else painted on a panel – is at hand and vision acts upon it, this action results in a certain impression, trace or image [*anazographema*] of the painted lion or man in the primary perceptive organ [sc. the heart], which trace and image remains and persists even when the thing perceived is no longer at hand.<sup>20</sup>

Michael chose as his examples a painted man or lion rather than real ones probably because otherwise it would have been unclear which precise aspect of a living and moving thing is impressed in the memory. Stethatos before him compared, conversely, a mental image to an actual one.

(iii) Did those who commissioned icons specify how they were to be painted? – No. Evidence here is very scarce, and to find anything even remotely relevant one has to go well outside Byzantine territory. In Novgorod, the excavated workshop of a late twelfth-century painter, possibly of Greek extraction, has yielded some of his correspondence.<sup>21</sup> This includes a complete letter from a customer: ‘Greeting from the priest to Gretsin [i.e. ‘the Greek’ as a sobriquet]. Paint me 2 six-winged angels on two little icons [*ikonku*] on top of a *deisus*. And I kiss you. And let the payment be from God, or as we agree.’<sup>22</sup> The diminutive *ikonka* instead of the regular *ikona*<sup>23</sup> refers to a small image, evidently a triptych where the seraphim occupied the wings while the central panel showed Christ between the Virgin and the Baptist.<sup>24</sup> Although the icon must have been intended for the

priest's own use ('paint for me'), he specifies its subject only in general terms and shows no concern for its manner of execution. Clearly, this patron did not determine the visual qualities of the particular icon he commissioned. If others did, we do not know about it.

Still, the fact that patrons would not tell painters how to paint does not necessarily mean that they did not care how they painted. The style of Byzantine (and early Russian) art can certainly be observed to change with time. Changes may well have occurred on the artists' own initiative, but it is reasonable – indeed necessary – to assume that customers would have preferred those artists who worked in a manner that appealed to their tastes. The devotional imagery discussed here is the product – or rather the gradual outcome – of a specific set of patrons' expectations rooted in the specific conditions under which such imagery was used.

Let me now trace the kinds of response that such expectations could elicit from eleventh-century Byzantine artists. They can be roughly grouped under three headings: labels, frames, texture.

## Labels

It is well known that certain Byzantine holy images, famous for their miracle-working power, bore special nicknames. A large icon of Christ the Guarantor (*Antiphonetes*) is first mentioned at a central location in Constantinople in the seventh century.<sup>25</sup> The chapel that housed it was embellished with a new *opus sectile* floor by Empress Zoe (d. 1050).<sup>26</sup> That empress also owned a small icon of the same name which she held capable of foretelling the future by changing its colour.<sup>27</sup> 'Christ the Guarantor' thus turned into 'Christ the Responder' (*Antiphonetes*). A steatite relief now in Padua is inscribed with the same word:<sup>28</sup> it may date from the eleventh century and could have been consulted in a similar manner, since the colour of soapstone does vary depending on the lighting.<sup>29</sup>

Other epithets added to the standard *IC XC* on certain icons of Christ posit a similarly intimate way of viewing. A medium-sized portable mosaic is inscribed ‘the Merciful One’ (*Eleemon*);<sup>30</sup> on a diminutive enamelled icon cover, Jesus is ‘the Benefactor’ (*Euergetes*).<sup>31</sup> Placed next to Christ’s name on a small panel, the words ‘answering’, ‘merciful’, ‘charitable’ shorten the emotional distance between image and beholder.

Multi-figural compositions could be accompanied by longer texts, such as Psalm 98:5 written in the margin under the Crucifixion in a Psalter dated 1077.<sup>32</sup> That miniature forms in effect a panel icon at the beginning of the book (the artist or the scribe was so aware of this fact that he drew above a similar image on one of the adjacent pages a frame with a loop, as if for hanging it on a wall).<sup>33</sup> The Crucifixion, therefore, does not present a pictorial gloss to a Psalm verse;<sup>34</sup> the inscription, rather, urges one to focus on Christ’s nailed feet and the blood flowing from them (both prominently depicted): ‘Exalt the Lord our God and venerate the footstool of His feet, for He is holy!’

An exceptionally verbose example is found in the unique series of prefatory miniatures to an early twelfth-century Psalter, accompanied (in the margin) by emotional lines taken from a tenth-century penitential poem.<sup>35</sup> Calls like ‘Envision in advance, O soul, the trials that await you, if you desire, after death, to get a more clement treatment’ or ‘Woe is me, the sweet face has turned away’ add even greater urgency to the dramatic scenes painted next to them.<sup>36</sup> It is as if the expressive force of painting had to be increased yet further, with words.

## Frames<sup>37</sup>

The steatite *Antiphonates* does not repeat its famous monumental counterpart (known from replicas) where the Saviour appeared standing,<sup>38</sup> and the small enamelled *Euergetes* does not resemble the enthroned Christ *Euergetes* found on church walls:<sup>39</sup> in both cases, the Son of God has been

brought closer to the viewer by a ‘zooming-in’ that leaves only the upper half of his body inside the frame. The Byzantines would of course encounter such a truncated image also on the inside of church domes or on coins, but in neither case did the context allow for its prayerful contemplation, as it does on small icons. Rather than follow an established convention of half-length portraits,<sup>40</sup> the latter depart from familiar models and point the way to the even more drastic close-up in certain twelfth-century works ([Figure 15.1](#)).

In earlier, tenth-century private icons proximity is effected first of all by simple reduction in size: holy images are brought down from the walls of the church onto the smaller, reachable surface of a panel or page. A dome-like medallion with Christ can be fitted on a rectangular board ([Figure 15.2](#)). Several ivory triptychs present, in portable form, rows of standing saints.<sup>41</sup> Similar standing figures, now extremely faded from long use, have been turned into frontispiece miniatures for an exceptionally tiny Psalter.<sup>42</sup>

Eleventh-century artists continued using this method of ‘scale reduction’: witness the New Testament scenes and the Crucifixion miniature discussed earlier,<sup>43</sup> the six full-length saints at the end of one manuscript,<sup>44</sup> the enthroned Christ at the beginning of two others,<sup>45</sup> or small panels portraying



Figure 15.1 Jesus Christ 'Emmanuel' (unknown size), twelfth century, Mount Sinai, Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan–Princeton–Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)



[Figure 15.2](#) Jesus Christ ‘Pantocrator’ (unknown size), tenth century, Mount Sinai, Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan–Princeton–Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)



[Figure 15.3](#) The Crucifixion (unknown size), eleventh century, Mount Sinai, Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan–Princeton–Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)





Figure 15.4 Part from a Crucifixion (unknown size), eleventh century, Mount Sinai, Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine (Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

a standing holy figure.<sup>46</sup> In one instance the pictures that open and close a Psalter form, as a pair, a miniaturized version of the murals in Byzantine church apses: the sacramental space of the altar has been turned into personal space for prayer.<sup>47</sup> Two further manuscripts repeat this composition in slightly altered form:<sup>48</sup> the central figure of the Virgin holding her Child has been enlarged, interrupted by the lower frame and thus ‘moved’ forward.<sup>49</sup> One of the latter miniatures has an accompanying verse inscription: ‘Those who command the bodiless intellects [sc. angels] stand up in awe beside the Mother of God’s Word.’ While Mother and Son look tenderly at each other, the flanking archangels face the viewer and serve, too, as a framing device.

In the pictorial frontispiece of a pocket-sized Gospel now in Baltimore, Christ, His full-length figure enlarged, looks at us rather than at the bowing apostles whom He blesses.<sup>50</sup> Their bent bodies direct our attention to Him and illustrate, as role models, the veneration we are to offer Him through His image. A bright red cushion draws our eyes to His bare feet – for reasons that become clear when we compare this image to the frontispiece of a Psalter, dated 1104, where the book’s original owner is shown prostrate at Christ’s feet, touching one of them as a sign of supplication (cf. Ps 98:5).<sup>51</sup> The flanking figures in this latter picture set the tone for prayer by having their hands stretched out towards the Saviour. The verses beside a similar image elsewhere explain: ‘The Virgin with the Baptist offers prayers to Christ, [our] sovereign and God and master.’<sup>52</sup>

The actual frame of the 1104 miniature has an elaborate architectural form. The way in which King David is squeezed inside it suggests a newly sharpened awareness of its role. (There is plenty of empty space in the page margin: David’s figure could easily have been placed there instead).<sup>53</sup> A frame might be decoratively enhanced in various ways: eleventh-century panel paintings had flat and markedly broad protective edges ([Figure 15.3](#); cf. [Figures 15.1](#) and [15.2](#)), probably often covered with ornamented metal;<sup>54</sup> such ornament was also imitated in paint ([Figure 15.4](#)). At the same time, artists became increasingly conscious of frames as a compositional element,

either forming a mere constraint (the apostles in the Baltimore miniature are uncomfortably crowded, evidently because the painter had trouble adjusting an extended composition to the page's vertical format)<sup>55</sup> or actively used (there is no practical reason why, elsewhere in the same Gospel book, the circular frame should cut off half of Christ's left hand or trim the scroll that He holds).<sup>56</sup> In the Padua steatite, carved rather than painted, the plaque's raised edge is turned into a window-sill on which Christ's arms rest as if He were leaning towards us.<sup>57</sup>

The logic behind certain eleventh-century framing devices is illustrated by a few painted vignettes in the famous Theodore Psalter of 1066. There – for the first time in this kind of otherwise traditional pictorial gloss – rectangular bust images of Christ, clearly meant to represent actual painted icons, appear beside the customary and more conventional round ones (*clipei*).<sup>58</sup> In one instance Christ is shown not within a panel but inside a window: what the Parma relief implies is now made explicit.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere He is reaching out from a painting towards the person praying before it.<sup>60</sup> A similar gesture remains half-hidden (thus left to the imagination) in the Psalter and New Testament of 1083, where the lower frame strikingly conceals all but two fingers of Christ's blessing hand.<sup>61</sup> Just like cinematographic close-up, such 'cropping' makes one perceive the portrayed Saviour as being physically close. A prayer recorded by Stethatos calls on God: 'now look upon me and pity me as I cry to You from the depths of my soul: "I have sinned!" Stretch Your hand to me, who am tossed by the tempest of sin.'<sup>62</sup>

In other instances of comparably 'focused' framing, segments from the familiar large depiction of the Last Judgement were singled out and presented for devotional contemplation as self-contained images of Paradise.<sup>63</sup>

The distinctive features of the first method of prayer are these [an anonymous author writes under the name of Symeon the New Theologian]. When a person stands at prayer, he raises hands, eyes and intellect heavenwards, and fills his intellect with divine thoughts, with images of celestial beauty, of the angelic hosts, of the abodes of the righteous.<sup>64</sup>

A single emotionally charged detail could also be separately brought forward for the viewer to empathize with. John Mauropous' poem 'On the Weeping Mother of God' shows that in his day the most dramatic part of a Crucifixion scene ([Figure 15.4](#)) might already form an independent icon.<sup>[65](#)</sup> Surviving panels of this kind, later in date, are usually interpreted as furnishing for the church services on Good Friday.<sup>[66](#)</sup> Mauropous, however, does not mention an accompanying depiction of the dead Christ and makes no reference to any liturgical context. He asks for consolation, the Virgin answers: the image speaks.<sup>[67](#)</sup>

## Texture

Christ in the Baltimore miniature is singled out through pigments as well as compositional arrangement: the gold of His footstool, halo, *clavi* and scroll makes His towering figure stand out all the more starkly.<sup>[68](#)</sup> The dark blue and dark violet of His clothing are echoed, in paler hues, by that of Paul on His left; the gold of His halo, by the yellowish-brown mantle of Peter on His right. 'Christ is blessing the Apostles', the caption to the image tells me. But, of course, he is also blessing me. I re-encounter Him in the volume's last miniature, at the beginning of the Gospel of John, wearing the same tunic and cloak, holding the same scroll and making a similar gesture.<sup>[69](#)</sup> He has now approached, with only half of His body visible, and His features are seen much more clearly. He does not look straight forward, and it is hard to read the expression on His face. This is a carefully painted face, rendered in ochre, white and pink of at least three different shades each (the close-up makes every detail of the surface notable). Fine brushstrokes describe the flesh of God, the Word made flesh of Whom the Gospel text on that same page speaks.

In the later eleventh century such bust-length portraits of Christ become common in small Gospel books.<sup>[70](#)</sup> (They never repeat each other, which makes it very unlikely that each reproduces some famous monumental

icon.<sup>71</sup>) The artists' skill varies, but the better preserved examples are all characterized by clearly differentiated brushwork.<sup>72</sup> This technique contrasts with the 'smooth' way of painting current during the 1060s, where individual brushstrokes, even in relatively large images, are all but indistinguishable ([Figure 15.4](#)).<sup>73</sup> Its earliest dated example, from 1072, is a miniature of Paradise where the vegetation is rendered with sinuous, flowing streaks of pigment, echoed by the nuanced shading of the Good Thief's halo and body.<sup>74</sup>

Psellos writes about a Crucifixion icon:

If one will but direct his gaze to the parts of the picture one after another, it will seem to him that some alter, some increase, some change, some experience or effect a difference, as if waxing or waning, and accordingly the dead body in the picture, even that which in fact seems so lifeless, will appear endowed with life. The appearance [of the figures] in such a picture can be observed even in images by unskilled artists ..., but these are all, so to speak, imitations of types and likenesses of likenesses. But in this picture such things do not seem to take their existence from [mere] colours, but the whole thing resembles nature, which is endowed with life and movement.<sup>75</sup>

If the writer refers here to a particular quality of the painting he describes, it is very likely to be the emphatically 'hazy' brushwork seen in some eleventh-century Crucifixion scenes ([Figure 15.3](#)).<sup>76</sup> 'For the parts of the body which are not visible are thus in an ambiguous state, and the visible parts are no less equivocal.'<sup>77</sup> The unfamiliar, equivocal element is certainly not the sorrowful faces with knit brows – these are already found in earlier works<sup>78</sup> – but the subtly nuanced treatment of the bodies which seem to take on a life of their own. The deep, dark fold of John's cloak ([Figure 15.3](#)) is not by itself expressive of emotion, yet heightens the dramatic effect of the whole: it serves as a foil for John's mournful gesture and face. Here is the forerunner of the agitated draperies popular with Comnenian artists: what was for Psellos a novelty turned subsequently into 'imitations of types', pictorial formulae. But the studied devices of painters in a later age were already anticipated by viewers in an earlier one. Anna Comnena's poem 'On Christ' refers to a single, separately framed image of the Infant ([Figure](#)

[15.1\).](#)<sup>79</sup> A century before her, Symeon the New Theologian sought an icon of the Virgin specially in order to look at the Child in her arms:

Yet again I fell into sorrow and I so longed to see You again that I went to kiss [*aspasasthai*] the spotless icon of her who bore You and venerated it. Before I rose up, You Yourself appeared to me within my poor heart, as though You had transformed it into light. And then I knew that I had You consciously within me.<sup>80</sup>

## Notes

[1](#) A.P. Kazhdan and A.J. Wharton, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, CA, 1985), 216:

In the later eleventh century, the artistic treatment of figures in both monumental and small-scale work altered. The modelling of these figures became more dramatic. Even more noticeably, the figures began to have the appearance of movement, though still in a carefully choreographed manner, and to interact. ... It is tempting to relate this new sense of human interaction not only to an increased appreciation of physical reality, but also to a concurrent development of broader social ties.

[2](#) E.g. A. Weyl Carr, 'Gospel Frontispieces from the Comnenian Period', *Gesta* 21 (1982), 3–20, esp. 6:

The liturgy had established itself in the eleventh century as one of the most significant stimulants to Byzantine imagery, and it was in fair measure through modifications to the liturgy in the Comnenian era that the major affective icons which distinguish the age came into being.

[3](#) On changes in style see K. Weitzmann, 'Byzantine Miniature and Icon Painting in the Eleventh Century', in K. Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), 271–313, esp. 271–81; O.S. Popova, 'The Ascetic Trend in Byzantine Art of the Second Quarter of the 11th Century and Its Subsequent Fate', *Nea Rhome* 2 (2005), 243–57. Unless specified otherwise, all works that I discuss below date, in my opinion, to the eleventh century. Space does not permit me to argue this dating in each case.

- 4 Princeton University Art Museum, inv. 1930–20: S. Kotzabassi et al., *Greek Manuscripts at Princeton, Sixth to Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 2010), 230–1 with fig. 246.
- 5 G. R. Parpulov, ‘Psalters and Person Piety in Byzantium’, in R.S. Nelson and P. Magdalino (eds), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2010), 77–105, esp. 89–92.
- 6 Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. gr. 752, fos. 17v–18v: E. T. De Wald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint: Vaticanus Graecus 752* (Princeton, 1942), ix, 6–7 with pls xi–xiii.
- 7 Formerly Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, MS 49, fos. 4v (now lost), 39r (now Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, MS 3): S. Der Nersessian, ‘A Psalter and New Testament Manuscript at Dumbarton Oaks’, *DOP* 19 (1965), 153–83, esp. 156–7, 167 with figs 2 and 7.
- 8 Cf. the observations of R.S. Nelson, ‘The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now’, *Art History* 12 (1989), 144–57, esp. 150–1.
- 9 See, for example, J. Herrin, ‘The Icon Corner in Medieval Byzantium’, in J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influences: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), 281–301.
- 10 TLG 3099.001, *BHG* 1692; ed. I. Hausherr, *The Life of Saint Symeon the New Theologian* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 276; cf. tr. R.P.H. Greenfield, *ibid.*, 277.
- 11 On this concept: K. Schade, *Andachtsbild: die Geschichte eines kunsthistorischen Begriffs* (Weimar, 1996). On the term *deesis* in Byzantine Greek: C. Walter, ‘Two Notes on the Deesis’, *REB* 26 (1968), 311–36, esp. 311–24.
- 12 E. g. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Coislin 66, fo. 4r: online at images.bnf.fr; K. Krause, *Die illustrierten Homilien des Johannes Chrysostomos in Byzanz* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 176 with pl. 96; see also pls 31 and 109 *ibid.*
- 13 TLG 5315.081; ed. MM.6.83–84; cf. tr. P. Karlin-Hayter in *BMFD*, 596. For a list of icons, some of them small triptychs, in the possession of a layman see M. Parani et al., ‘Un exemple d’inventaire d’objets liturgiques: le testament d’Eustathios Boïlas (avril 1059)’, *REB* 61 (2003), 143–65.
- 14 G.A. Soteriou and M.G. Soteriou, *Eikones tes Mones Sina*, 2 vols (Athens, 1956–8), 52–5 with figs 39–41.
- 15 See n. 6 above.

16 Letter 129: Greek text and tr. in A. Cutler and R. Browning, ‘In the Margins of Byzantium? Some Icons in Michael Psellos’, *BMGS* 16 (1992), 21–32, esp. 28.

17 *TLG* 5088.001, *BHG* 979; cit. J. Gouillard, ‘Contemplation et imagerie sacrée dans le christianisme byzantin’, in J. Gouillard, *La vie religieuse à Byzance* (London, 1981), II.29–50, esp. 41–2; ed. H. Delehaye, *AASS*. Nov.3.549; tr. R.P.H. Greenfield, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion* (Washington, DC, 2000), 224–5.

18 *BHG* 303; cit. Gouillard, ‘Contemplation’, 41.

19 Ed. Hausherr and tr. Greenfield (n. 10 above), 20–1.

20 *TLG* 4034.002; ed. P. Wendland, *CAG*.22.1.5. On Michael of Ephesus: R. Browning, ‘An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Comnena’, in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed* (London, 1990), 393–406, esp. 399–400.

21 In English see E. Matsuki, ‘A Greek Painter in Novgorod’, *Cyrillomethodianum* 12 (1988), 15–39; Y. Petrova (ed.), *Sacred Arts and City Life: The Glory of Medieval Novgorod*, exh. cat. (Baltimore, MD, 2005), cat. 58–71.

22 Novgorod birchbark document no. 549: online at [www.gramoty.ru](http://www.gramoty.ru).

23 As, for instance, in birchbark document no. 558, which comes from the same complex.

24 This letter is usually – and, I think, wrongly – taken to refer to an iconostasis: e.g. V.L. Ianin, *Ia poslal tebe berestu*, 3d edn (Moscow, 1998), 294.

25 C.A. Mango, *The Brazen House* (Copenhagen, 1959), 142–8.

26 Vatican, BAV, MS Vat. gr. 753, fo. 4r; ed. G. Sola, ‘Giambografi sconosciuti del secolo XI’, *Roma e l’Oriente* 11 (1916), 18–27, 149–53, esp. 24–5; cit. M.D. Laufermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 2003), 327–8.

27 *TLG* 2702.001, Psellos, *Chronogr.* 6.66; ed. É. Renaud, vol. 1 (Paris, 1926), 149, tr. E.R.A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* (Harmondsworth, 1966), 188.

28 Padua, cathedral treasury: I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* (Vienna, 1985), cat. 135 (cf. cat. 147 *ibid.*, a fourteenth-century work); colour photograph in A.M. Romanini (ed.), *Enciclopedia dell’arte medievale*, vol. 9 (Rome, 1998), 77.

29 Professor Kalavrezou writes that the icon is green; it appears whitish to me (a bad omen).

- 30 Berlin, Museum für byzantinische Kunst, inv. 6430: O. Demus, *Die byzantinischen Mosaikiken: die grossformatigen Ikonen* (Vienna, 1991), cat. 5.
- 31 Rome, Santa Prassede, treasury: M. Andaloro, ‘Gli smalti dell’icona col Cristo “Evergetē” nella Basilica romana di Santa Prassede’, *Prospettiva* 40 (1985), 57–61; cit. H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994), 331–2, 590 with fig. 98.
- 32 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Theol. gr. 336, fo. 17v: P. Buberl and H. Gerstinger, *Die byzantinischen Handschriften*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1938), cat. 7; colour photograph online at [ica.princeton.edu/millet](http://ica.princeton.edu/millet).
- 33 Ibid., fo. 1r.
- 34 Cf. London, British Library, Add. MS 19352, fo. 172r: online at [www.bl.uk/manuscripts](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts).
- 35 Mt Athos, Dionysiou Monastery, MS 65, fos. 11r–12r: Parpulov, ‘Psalters’ (n. 5 above), 96–7.
- 36 Colour photographs in S.M. Pelekanidis et al., *The Treasures of Mount Athos: Illuminated Manuscripts*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1974), 116–17.
- 37 Cf. the subtle observations of G. Peers, *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium* (University Park, 2004).
- 38 A.P. Kazhdan and H. Maguire, ‘Byzantine Hagiographical Texts as Sources on Art’, *DOP* 45 (1991), 1–22, esp. 15–16 with figs 24 and 26.
- 39 A. Cutler, ‘The Dumbarton Oaks Psalter and New Testament: The Iconography of the Moscow Leaf’, *DOP* 37 (1983), 35–46, esp. figs 5–7.
- 40 On the early history of such portraits: R. Warland, *Das Brustbild Christi: Studien zur spätantiken und frühbyzantinischen Bildgeschichte* (Rome, 1986).
- 41 E.g. Vatican Museums, inv. 62441; Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. OA 3247 (the ‘Harbaville Triptych’); London, British Museum, inv. 1923, 1205.1 (the ‘Borradaile Triptych’): R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki (eds), *Byzantium, 330–1453*, exh. cat. (London, 2008), cat. 76–8.
- 42 Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS + 24 sup., fos. 9r–10r (St John the Baptist, Christ, the Virgin), 195r–v (unidentifiable bishop saints): G.R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters, ca. 850–1350 AD* (Plovdiv, 2014), figs 28–30.
- 43 Nn. 4 and 6 above.

44 Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, MS 762, Psalter and New Testament, fos. 330v–331r: P. K. Chrestou et al., *Hoi thesauroi tou Hagiou Orous: Eikonographemena cheirographa*, vol. 4 (Athens, 1991), 123.

45 Moscow, Russian State Library, MS gr. 10, Gospel book, fo. 2r: V.D. Likhachova, *Byzantine Miniature* (Moscow, 1977), pl. 34; Washington DC, Dumbarton Oaks, MS 5, fo. 12v: online at [pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/23419344](http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/23419344).

46 E.g. St Nicholas on a mosaic icon on Patmos (Monastery of St John) and on a cast bronze one in Thessaloniki (Museum of Byzantine Culture, inv. BA2): A.D. Kominis (ed.), *Patmos: Treasures of the Monastery* (Athens, 1988), 106–7, 129–30; D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi (ed.), *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, exh. cat. (Athens, 2002), cat. 179.

47 Vatopedi 762, fos. 17r, 88v: Chrestou et al., *Thesauroi*, 120. See also Mount Athos, Kostamonitou Monastery, MS 105, fos. 82v–83r: S. Kadas, *Ta eikonographemena cheirographa tou Hagiou Orous* (Thessalonike, 2008), 471.

48 Formerly Athos, Pantokrator 49, fo. 4v (n. 7 above); formerly Berlin, Universität, Museum für christliche Archäologie, inv. 3807 (now Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. BBcə-1309), fo. 1v: G. Stuhlfauth, ‘A Greek Psalter with Byzantine Miniatures’, *Art Bulletin* 15 (1933), 311–26, esp. 318, 321 with fig. 7; N. Kavrus-Hoffmann and Y. Piatnitsky, ‘Illuminovannaia grecheskaia psaltir’ XI veka v Èrmitazhe’, *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Èrmitazha* 74 (2015), 35–52, esp. colour pl. II.

49 Cf. a very similar conceit in the tenth-century ivory triptych Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 71.158 (which might, however, have been trimmed): online at [art.thewalters.org](http://art.thewalters.org). Note also how the Virgin’s proper right arm there overlaps one of the framing columns.

50 Baltimore, MD, Walters Art Museum, MS W.522, fo. 1r: online at [www.thedigitalwalters.org](http://www.thedigitalwalters.org).

51 Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library, MS gr. 3, fo. 8v: L. Nees, ‘An Illuminated Byzantine Psalter at Harvard University’, *DOP* 29 (1975), 205–24, esp. 209–16 with fig. 1. See also Thessaloniki, Museum of Byzantine Culture, inv. BA2 (n. 46 above).

52 Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. BBcə-1309, fo. 2r: Stuhlfauth, ‘Greek Psalter’ (n. 48 above), 321 with fig. 8.

53 As, for instance, St John the Baptist on fo. 90r of Walters 522 (n. 50 above).

54 E.g. Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. I–4: Y. Piatnitsky et al. (eds), *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia*, exh. cat. (London, 2000), cat. B87. See also some icons on Patmos (n. 46 above) and Sinai:

Soteriou, *Eikones* (n. 14 above), figs 47–8, 50, 83, 157, 197.

55 Cf. similar scenes in the eleventh-century Gospel lectionary Athos, Dionysiou 587, fos. 14v, 32v, 158v; Pelekanidis et al., *Treasures* (n. 36 above), 167, 171, 213 and, in contrast, the tenth-century ivory relief Paris, Louvre, inv. MRR 422, where the frame props the figures rather than constraining them: H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium*, exh. cat. (New York, 1997), cat. 96.

56 Baltimore, MD, Walters 522 (n. 50 above), fos. 90r, 321r. Cf. also the way Christ's halo is clipped by the frame in University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, MS 1244, fo. 184r: online at [resource.library.utoronto.ca/manuscripts/digobjectbook.cfm?Idno=F3994](http://resource.library.utoronto.ca/manuscripts/digobjectbook.cfm?Idno=F3994).

57 N. 28 above.

58 On the *imago clipeata*: J. Engemann in *RAC*, vol. 17 (Stuttgart, 1996), 1016–41. It is frequently found in the famous ninth-century Khludov Psalter in Moscow: e.g. Likhachova, *Byz. Miniature* (n. 45 above), pls [0]–3. Neither this manuscript nor any of its relatives contain rectangular, panel-like images of Christ like those in the Theodore Psalter.

59 Ibid., fo. 79r.

60 London, BL Add. 19352 (n. 34 above), fo. 125v.

61 Formerly Athos, Pantokrator 49, fo. 187bis (now Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery, inv. 2580): B.L. Fonkich et al. (eds), *Mount Athos Treasures in Russia, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, exh. cat. (Moscow, 2004), cat. ii.10.

62 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS E.D. Clarke 2, fo. 194v; ed. Parpulov, *Toward a History* (n. 42 above), 279.

63 Moscow, University Library, MS gr. 2, detached leaf: E.N. Dobrynina (ed.), *The Greek Illuminated Praxapostolos Dated 1072 in the Scientific Library of Moscow State University* (Moscow, 2004), 21, 70, 104–14, 144–7, 150, 179–80, 197 (incl. detailed discussion of the painting technique and pigments); London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS Sion L40.2/G5, fo. 374v (this miniature illustrates PG.48.1051): unpublished; Mt Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, MS 762, fo. 17v: Chrestou et al., *Thesauroi* (n. 44 above), 120. Cf. the depictions of Joasaph's dreams of Paradise in the late eleventh-century illustrated copy of the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph*, Athos, Iberon Monastery, MS 463, fos. 100r, 133r: S.M. Pelekanidis et al., *The Treasures of Mount Athos: Illuminated Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Athens, 1975), 79, 89.

[64](#) Ed. I. Hausherr, ‘La méthode d’oraison hésychaste’, *OC* 9 (1927), 101–209, esp. 151–2; tr. G.E.H. Palmer et al., *Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 4 (London, 1995), 67. This is not the method of prayer that Pseudo-Symeon approves of, but since he begins his exposition with it, it must have been a common one.

[65](#) TLG 2709.004, *Epigram* 20; Greek text and tr. in C.A. Trypanis, *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 442. In the primary MS witnesses Vatic. gr. 676 (fols 8v–9r) and Paris. suppl. gr. 690 (fol. 254r) the poem is found among those dedicated to portraits of individual saints, not among those on New Testament images (Migne decided to correct this: PG.120.1130–1). This clearly shows that it refers to a single figure rather than a Crucifixion or Lamentation scene.

[66](#) E.g. Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery, inv. 28834: H.C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, exh. cat. (New York, 2004), cat. 104.

[67](#) This poetic device is not new (Lauxtermann, *Poetry*, 326), but it gains strength when combined with the novel dramatic close-up of eleventh-century imagery.

[68](#) Baltimore, MD, Walters 522 (n. 50 above), fo. 1r.

[69](#) Ibid., fo. 321r.

[70](#) Full list of examples: G.R. Parpulov, ‘Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts of the Walters Art Museum’, *Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 62 (2004), 71–189, esp. 90.

[71](#) Cf. Cutler, ‘Moscow Leaf’ (n. 39 above).

[72](#) E.g. Moscow, State Historical Museum, MS Synod. gr. 518, fo. 252r: Fonkich et al. (eds), *Mount Athos* (n. 61 above), cat. i.25.

[73](#) See for instance Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. I–4 (n. 54 above). On this ‘blended’ manner of painting: O.S. Popova, ‘The 1061 Gospel Miniatures and Byzantine Art of the 1060s and 1070s’, *Nea Rhome* 6 (2009), 249–69.

[74](#) Moscow University, MS gr. 2, detached leaf (n. 63 above).

[75](#) TLG 2702.008, *Hagiographic oration* 3.B; ed. E.A. Fisher (Leipzig, 1994), 196; tr. E.A. Fisher, ‘Image and Ekphrasis in Michael Psellos’ Sermon on the Crucifixion’, *BSL* 55 (1994), 44–55, esp. 55; commentaries: Belting, *Likeness* (n. 31 above), 261–4, 528–9; R. Cormack, ‘Living Painting’, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 235–53, esp. 237–9; C. Barber, *Contesting the Logic of Painting: Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Leiden, 2007), 72–80.

76 E.g. Athos, Iberon 56, fo. 11v: G. Galavaris, *Holy Monastery of Iveron: The Illuminated Manuscripts* (Mount Athos, 2002), 34–5; Vatopedi 762, fo. 149r: Chrestou et al., *Thesauroi* (n. 44 above), 121.

77 Tr. Fisher (n. 75 above), 54.

78 E.g. the tenth-century painted reliquary in the Vatican Museums, inv. 61898: Cormack and Vassilaki (eds), *Byzantium* (n. 41 above), cat. 244.

79 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut.V, 10, fo. 178r–v: online at [teca.bmlonline.it](http://teca.bmlonline.it); Greek text and tr. in Carr, ‘Gospel Frontispieces’ (n. 2 above), 9.

80 TLG 3116.007, Symeon Neotheol., *Oration* 36.11; ed. B. Krivochéine, *SC* 113, 350–2; tr. (slightly modified here) C.J. deCatanzaro, *The Discourses* (London, 1980), 376. Cf. Barber, *Contesting* (n. 75 above), 23–6, who thinks that the icon did not necessarily contain an image of the Christ child. I think the context shows that it did.

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